

Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities



2012 Annual Report

Cover Photo: “*Texas Capitol Dome*” with a statue of William B. Travis in the foreground plus the American and Texas flags
Photograph taken by Angi English

Back Cover: “*Wordle of the 2012 Annual Report*”
The Wordle™ graphic highlights the following words: people, disabilities, accessible, information, governor, awards, employment and Texans/Texas.

(A Wordle™ is a graphic image or “word cloud” created from a source that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source material.)

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STATE OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

RICK PERRY
GOVERNOR

March 21, 2013

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
Texas State Capitol
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Perry,

On behalf of the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, it is our privilege to submit our annual report on the work of the Committee and staff from January to December, 2012. The report represents major accomplishments and activity highlights for the 2012 calendar year; it is not intended to be a cumulative history. Report components include quarterly staff activity, an analysis of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Roundtable events, presentations made by our Committee members, detailed outreach in the communities, statistics on the number of constituents assisted, and summaries of efforts and events in partnership with our Local Committees. Also included is the *Annual Disability History Perspective* for 2012 which includes significant historical events related to people with disabilities that have occurred in Texas, the U.S. and internationally. We are extremely proud of the accomplishments made by staff and Committee members during 2012.

The staff and members of the Committee will continue to seek out new partnerships and collaborations in order to meet our mission. Additionally, we will explore ways to utilize social media and technology solutions to reach out to a wider audience. We look forward to the opportunities and challenges of 2013.

Governor, we appreciate the support you give the Committee and staff in our work with and for Texans with disabilities and respectfully submit our annual report. We look forward to 2013 and continuing our work with you, the legislature and citizens toward a fully inclusive Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Angela English".

Angela English, LPC, LMFT
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe Bontke".

Joe Bontke
Chairperson

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Executive Summary

Outreach and Awards Programs

Over the past year the Committee’s community outreach coordinator has helped with the start-up of a new local Mayor’s Committees on People with Disabilities in Georgetown, and visited with contacts in San Marcos and Galveston about potential future Local Committees. Local Committees function in a similar fashion as the Governor’s Committee, except at the local level. And, when important information needs to be disseminated to Texans with disabilities across the state, as in a natural disaster, messaging through our Local Committees has been extremely successful. Local Committees have their own community projects and awards programs and the Governor’s Committee supports Local Committees by providing timely information via its messaging outreach through GovDelivery and the Local Committees email list on a variety of disability related topics and by helping to highlight their local programs and awards. To date, the Local Committee email list reaches almost 300 people, in addition to 1,854 served by the GovDelivery bulletins.

Three successful awards programs were completed during 2012: the Barbara Jordan Media Awards held in partnership with the [School of Journalism and Mass Communication](#) and the [Office of Disability Services](#) of Texas State University in San Marcos; the annual Lex Frieden Employment Awards held in Houston in partnership with the Houston Mayor’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities and the Greater Houston Business Leadership Network; and the annual presentation of the [APA/GCPD Accessibility Awards](#) held in Austin, in partnership with the Accessibility Specialists Association (APA). In conjunction with the Lex Frieden Employment Awards in October, a Texas version of the [National Disability Employment Awareness Month poster](#) was created in partnership with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services Media Services Department and sent to almost 2,500 public and private businesses in Texas as well as some locations in other states, highlighting the benefits of employing Texans with disabilities. An art competition is held each year to choose artwork created by an artist with a disability to be featured on the poster. This year’s theme, “A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?,” blended perfectly with the winning artwork featuring a flock of pink flamingos. The artwork is by Beverly Fuqua.

“A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?”

Beverly Fuqua hopes to continue creating and teaching art until she can no longer hold a pencil, pastel or brush.

Ms. Fuqua has a rare genetic disorder, Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which led to her having to use a wheelchair by the late 1990s. Still, she looked upon this as a blessing – a development in her life that would allow her more opportunity to focus on her art. She made time to use her talent to teach fine art to children with disabilities, helping them to build self-esteem and confidence through their own artwork. She continues to teach summer workshops, to help raise funds for service animals, and to raise public awareness of mobility issues, accessible parking, and, with her partner Otis, make people aware of the role of service animals in providing independence, safety and confidence in their partners.

Ms. Fuqua has a particular passion for painting animals and sees deeply metaphorical messages in their poses. This year’s winning entry is titled “In the Pink,” and features five pink flamingos wading in shallow water with a forest in the background. Flamingos, she says, tend to always flock together. “Apart, each can be vulnerable, but as a flock, each becomes safer and stronger. By working together, they are all safer.”

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH
OCTOBER 2012

Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
http://governor.state.tx.us/disabilities

Partnered in partnership with
TEXAS
Department of Aging and Disability Services
www.das.sos.state.tx.us # 800.628.3119

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GovDelivery

The Committee continues its targeted efforts to help educate and inform Texans on the variety of issues important to Texans with disabilities in each of its [ten issue areas](#) of access, communications, education, emergency management, health, housing, recreation, transportation, veterans and workforce. Since July 7, 2011, the Committee has been utilizing the GovDelivery platform to do this.

Participation in GovDelivery bulletins on six topic areas has grown from its inception in July of 2011, from 6,059 participants to 10,843 participants (79 percent growth). Some participants may subscribe to more than one topic area. GovDelivery has greatly increased the number of people we reach directly and has streamlined communications, directing users to information that creates high value to our Committee, citizens, local communities and advocates across Texas and the U.S. Outreach and technical assistance efforts are structured into six topic areas:

1. Accessible Technology, ADA and Accessibility/Disability Rights
2. Accessible Technology
3. Emergency Management and People with Disabilities
4. Employment of People with Disabilities
5. Local Disabilities Committees & Awards Programs, and
6. Veterans with Disabilities

Individuals can request multiple GovDelivery topics thus the total number of subscriptions may overlap. For example, if one subscriber is signed up for all six topics, this counts as six subscriptions. A single bulletin may include multiple topics.

From January 1 through December 31, 2012, we provided disability-related information through GovDelivery in the following areas:

<u>GovDelivery Bulletin Topics</u>	<u>Subscribers</u>	<u>Bulletins Sent</u>
Accessible Technology	1,752	90
ADA and Accessibility / Disability Rights	1,967	206
Emergency Management	1,921	180
Employment of People with Disabilities	1,673	80
Local Disabilities Committees and Award Programs	1,854	57
Veterans with Disabilities	1,676	57

Constituent Assistance Database

The staff of the Committee continued in 2012 to utilize a Microsoft Access database to accurately track communication with constituents and provide educational and informational technical assistance, previously recorded manually. The database allows us to do [quality management](#) analysis regarding calls and emails so we can direct our technical assistance into subjects and issues where and when it is needed most. For the calendar year, staff responded to **1,060** personalized requests for technical assistance from citizens, and provided **795,811** instances of technical assistance, education and outreach through the GovDelivery platform.

Committee Members

[Appointed Committee members](#) participated throughout the year in their local communities by providing 37 instances of outreach activities.

Office of Disability Employment Policy Alliance

In January 2012, the Governor's Committee continued its alliance with the [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) and the National Association of Governor's Committees on People with Disabilities (NAGC). The Alliance has the following mutual goals:

Outreach and Communication Goals

- Disseminate information through ODEPs and NAGCs websites and Facebook pages.
- Disseminate training and education materials to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities at conferences and events.
- Disseminate information on conferences and events that advance employment for people with disabilities.

Training and Education Goals

- Disseminate training and education materials to NAGC members, local governments, employers and community-based organizations that address disability employment issues and advance recruitment and employment of job candidates with disabilities.
- Disseminate and share with NAGC members and local partners effective disability employment practices.

Technical Assistance Goals

- Conduct activities to identify, document and disseminate effective, emerging or model disability employment strategies, policies, and practices.
- Collaborate to identify employment issues of concern to state and local partners, employers, and people with disabilities to whom the Alliance should direct particular attention and resources.

National Alliance Dialogue Goals

- Raise awareness of the importance of the employment of people with disabilities.
- As appropriate, convene or participate in forums, information sharing discussions, focus groups, or stakeholder meetings on innovative employment solutions or on issues critical to state or local implementation of disability employment policies and practices.

Southwest Conference on Disability

For the past three years, staff have partnered with the [New Mexico Governor's Disability Commission](#) and the [New University of New Mexico Center on Development and Disability](#) on the [Southwest Conference on Disability](#). Individuals participate in the conference from all over the United States.

Also in regards to accessible technology, the staff of the Governor's Committee host TechLunch, which is an informal gathering of public and private entities interested in accessible technology and products. TechLunch has been meeting the first Wednesday of every month for the past 19 years. Discussion and actions from this group has led to a better understanding of the benefits of accessible technology to Texans with disabilities and has become a model for other states.

83rd Legislative Session Policy Recommendations

Finally, the Committee developed its [2013-2015 biennium policy recommendations](#) for the 83rd Legislative Session, a 145-page report that included 140 recommendations related to Texans with disabilities' full inclusion and access to community and work life in Texas.

In summary, the staff and Committee have had a productive year and look forward to 2013.

History

The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities has a long and rich history. Shortly after Franklin Delano Roosevelt in August of 1943 declared October 24-30 as National Hearing Week, Texas Governor Coke Stevenson released a Proclamation for National Hearing Week in Texas. In 1950, Governor Allan Shivers appointed the first "Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped" and in 1978 Governor Dolph Briscoe officially created the Committee through [Executive Order DB-40](#). Executive orders by governors William P. Clements in 1981 ([WPC-14A](#)) and 1987 ([WPC 87-16](#)) and Mark White in 1983 ([MW-10](#)) continued the committee, with Executive Order MW-10 changing the name to the "Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons." In 1991, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities was created statutorily by [Senate Bill 381](#) in order to continue the functions of the Council on Disabilities, a separate entity, which was abolished on the recommendation of the Sunset Commission.

Mission

The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities' mission is to provide leadership and support so that its citizens with disabilities can live and work in a state where people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full inclusion and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.

Committee Functions

The Committee's eleven core functions are outlined in the [Human Resources Code, Title 7, Chapter 115, Section 115.009](#). The Committee shall:

1. Serve as a central source of information and education on the abilities, rights, problems, and needs of persons with disabilities, and as necessary, issue reports;
2. Provide information to and advise the Governor and the Governor's staff on matters relating to the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life;
3. Before the end of each even-numbered year, submit to the Governor and to the Legislature a report that includes:
 - A. the status of the States compliance with federal and state laws pertaining to rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities and recommendations to achieve further compliance, if necessary;
 - B. a long-range state plan for persons with disabilities and recommendations to implement that plan; and
 - C. any [recommended changes in state laws](#) relating to persons with disabilities;
4. Serve as the states liaison agency in working with the [President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities](#) (now [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)) and other entities involved in activities or concerns affecting persons with disabilities;

5. Develop and work with a statewide network of volunteer community-level committees to promote dissemination of information about and implementation of federal and state laws addressing rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities;
6. Evaluate the States compliance with the federal [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(Pub. L. No. 101-336\)](#) and other federal and state statutes relating to rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities;
7. Provide information and technical assistance to public and private agencies and businesses to promote and facilitate implementation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. No. 101-336) and other federal and state statutes relating to rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities;
8. Collect and evaluate data on employment of persons with disabilities by state agencies;
9. Work with legislative committees and with state agencies on the development of laws and policies that affect persons with disabilities;
10. Promote [compilation and publication of state laws relating to persons with disabilities](#); and
11. [Issue awards](#) and other forms of recognition to persons and organizations making outstanding contributions to the employment of persons with disabilities and to public awareness of issues impacting persons with disabilities.

Budget and Expenditure Report

Appropriation Year 2012

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Operating Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 260,710	\$ 261,353
Member Travel	\$ 15,500	\$ 11,543
Staff Travel	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,820
Operating Expenses	\$ 28,175	\$ 23,571
Totals:	\$ 309,385	\$ 300,287

Source:
Office of the Governor, Financial Services Division
As of December 31, 2012
Includes applicable billing for Fiscal Year 2012

The Committee's Ten Issue Areas

The Committee structures its work into ten broad issue areas, they are:

[Access](#)

State and federal laws strive to guarantee that people with disabilities can access the same places and services as the rest of the population. The Committee examines the physical accessibility of places and programmatic access to services. The scope of this examination includes any services that fall under [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), which covers State and local governments, and [Title III of the ADA](#), which covers most business enterprises, known as public accommodations. The Committee looks at other important sub-issues in this area, such as [accessible voting](#) and the use of [service animals](#). Key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are the [Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation](#) (TDLR) and the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ).

[Communications](#)

People with disabilities deserve effective communication, whether they are applying for jobs, speaking to their doctors, or receiving emergency alerts. For this reason, accessible communication and the assistive technologies that make this communication possible are of vital importance in all of the Committee's issue areas. The Committee examines the accessibility of websites, e-learning tools, and emergency notifications, to name just a few, and monitors new and emerging assistive technology devices. The Committee is also dedicated to promoting "[People First language](#)," which emphasizes the dignity of each person by putting the person before the disability in descriptive language. Key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are the [Texas Department of Information Resources](#) (DIR), the [Texas Public Utilities Commission](#) (PUC), the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC), and the [U.S. Access Board](#).

[Education](#)

Students with disabilities can face educational challenges from the moment they begin pre-school through the day they sit for a professional licensing examination. The Committee supports inclusion and accommodation of people with disabilities at all ages and levels of the educational process. The Committee's work in this area covers services provided under the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA); the special education process as administered by the Texas Education Agency; anti-discrimination under [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#); and accessible educational technologies. The key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are the [Texas Education Agency](#) (TEA) and the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

[Emergency Management](#)

Texas faces a wide range of potential hazards; since [1953, it has experienced more Presidentially-declared disasters than any other state](#). The Committee covers all aspects of emergency management for Texans with disabilities, including planning for natural, man-made, and disease-related disasters. The Committee plays an instrumental role in the Functional Needs

and Support Services committee at the [Texas Division of Emergency Management](#) (TDEM). This interdisciplinary committee of experts continually updates comprehensive guidance on meeting the needs of the Whole Community, including citizens with functional and access needs, during an emergency. The key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are TDEM, the [Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#) (HHSC), the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS), the [Texas Public Utility Commission](#) (PUC), the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA) and the [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS).

Health

The Committee is dedicated to promoting health and wellness among Texans with disabilities, including those who face financial, attitudinal, or physical barriers to quality healthcare. The Committee provides analysis and guidance in the areas of health insurance, public benefit programs such as Medicaid and Medicare, and physical accessibility of medical facilities and equipment. The Committee is also dedicated to promoting mental health and addressing the particular needs of those experiencing mental illness. Further, as the population of Texas ages, more Texans have increased and varied health care needs. The Committee supports solutions that allow Texans to “age in place,” supported by their family and community. The key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS), the [Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services](#) (DARS), the [Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services](#) (DADS), and the [Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services](#) (CMS).

Housing

A stable, accessible home can allow a Texan with a disability to live a productive life of independence within the community. The Committee supports affordable, accessible housing options and compliance with the [Fair Housing Act](#) and local visitability ordinances. The Committee also provides information on home modifications, financial assistance for housing, and tax credits and exemptions. The key State and federal agencies that the Committee partners with are the [Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs](#) (TDHCA) and the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD).

Recreation

Recreation promotes physical and mental wellness for all Texans. The Committee supports accessible recreational opportunities for Texans with disabilities and provides information on physical access to recreational facilities, including parks, sports arenas and arts organizations. The Committee also applauds the involvement of people with disabilities on sports teams and as artists, actors and musicians. The key State and federal agencies the Committee partners with are the [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) (TPWD) and the [U.S. Access Board](#). There are also independent organizations contracted by the [U.S. Department of the Interior](#), such as the [National Park Service](#) and the [National Center on Accessibility](#), that provide consultation on accessible recreational opportunities.

[Transportation](#)

Because people with disabilities are more active in their communities than ever before, they deserve reliable and accessible transportation to allow for their full participation in a wide range of activities. The Committee examines all forms of transportation, from the everyday issues of accessible parking and paratransit services, to planning for business and recreational travel by airplane and ship. Key State and federal agency partners are the [Texas Department of Transportation](#) (TxDOT), the [Texas Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (DMV), the [Texas Department of Public Safety](#) (DPS), the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA), the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) (DOT), the [Federal Transit Administration](#) (FTA), the [Aviation Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation](#), and the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ).

[Veterans](#)

Texas is currently home to around 1.7 million Veterans, many with disabilities. The Committee looks at all aspects of Veteran's services, including housing, medical care, benefits determination, employment and health. The 82nd Legislature created the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services to improve the coordination of services for Texas Veterans, service members and their families. The key State and federal agencies that partner with the Committee are [Texas Workforce Commission Veterans Services](#), the [Texas Veterans Commission](#) (TVC), and the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA).

[Workforce](#)

Texans with disabilities represent a valuable and skilled labor market that is sometimes overlooked by employers. The Committee supports compliance with [Title I of the ADA](#), which prohibits discrimination against applicants or employees with disabilities by covered entities. The Committee also supports innovative approaches to integrating people with disabilities into the workforce, including the use of reasonable accommodations, assistive technologies, and trainings in best practices for both employers and employees. The key State and federal agencies that partner with the Committee are the [Texas Workforce Commission](#) (TWC), the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC), and the Department of Labor, particularly the [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP).

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Committee Membership and Staff

Introduction

Based on the Committees enabling statute, Human Resources Code, Chapter 115, Section 115, the Governor appoints 12 citizen members to the Committee every two years. Seven of the Committee Members must be people with disabilities. Representatives from seven state agencies serve as Ex Officio members.

Committee Members

Joe Bontke of Houston is the current Chair of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. He is the Outreach Manager and Ombudsman for the Houston District Office of U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Joe has been in the field of Human Resources and Civil Rights for the past 26 years and has experience in employment law and adult education. With a Bachelor's in Philosophy and a Masters in Education, he has been a Human Resources Director, a Training Coordinator for the American Disabilities Act (ADA) Technical Assistance Center for Federal Region VI, was appointed as Assistant Professor at Baylor College of Medicine and served as Vice Chair of the Committee before his appointment to Chair. Using his entertaining style, Joe has educated groups throughout the country and most recently, his work at the EEOC has enabled him to empower employers and employees with the understanding they need to work effectively at their jobs. Joe's philosophy of education is - that 90% is knowing where to find the information when you need it.

Aaron W. Bangor, PhD, of Austin is a Principal Member of Technical Staff at AT&T Labs and currently serves as Vice Chair of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. He is a member of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and serves on national and international committees regarding the usability and accessibility of technology. He holds seven patents and is also board certified in professional ergonomics as a Certified Human Factors Professional. Dr. Bangor received Bachelor's degrees, a Master's degree, and a Doctoral Degree in Human Factors Engineering from Virginia Tech.

Rodolfo "Rudy" Becerra, Jr. of Nacogdoches earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Rehabilitation from Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU). While at the university, he worked as a Disability Consultant for the Office of Students with Disabilities and a Library Assistant managing the adaptive technology in the computer lab. He is a former member of the Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities and a current member on the East Texas Community Health Services Inc. board of directors. Currently, Mr. Becerra is pursuing his Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at SFASU.

Daphne Brookins of Forest Hill is a Human Services Specialist for the City of Fort Worth (CAP). She is a former Alumni board member of Texas Wesleyan University, and serves on the board of directors for Expand Your Horizons, introducing young girls to careers in fields of Math and Science, and Amon Carter Jr. Downtown YMCA, Girls, Inc., New Directions Initiative, Tarrant County Challenge, and Southeast Fort Worth Dropout Coalition. She is a former forum leader and past spokesperson for the American Cancer Society, former Mayor Pro Tem and

Councilman for the City of Forest Hill, a past member of the Tarrant County CHIP Coalition and a former member of Fort Worth Sister Cities Young Professional Advisory Council. Ms. Brookins was awarded “Greatest Woman in Texas” in 2009 and “40 Under 40” in 2008 by the Fort Worth Business Press. She received a Bachelor’s degree from Texas Wesleyan University.

David A. Fowler of Katy is a retired U.S. Army Veteran. He serves as a Vice President for the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the President of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Texas Chapter. He has served as the Vice President and Advocacy Director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America's, Texas Chapter and as a Commissioner on the Houston Commission on Disabilities. He is a member the Disabled American Veterans, and the 82nd Airborne Association. Mr. Fowler attended Houston Community College.

Connie Sue Kelley of Humble was a caregiver for many years for her husband, who had serious health problems until he passed away in 2009, and also for her daughter, who has had health issues since she was nine years old. Ms. Kelley is a native Texan - born in Houston and raised in the oil fields of West Texas and East Texas, living in oil field camps which provided the sense of community that helped form who she is. Ms. Kelley attended Kilgore Jr. College, where she was nominated to Who’s Who in Education, and later attended Stephen F. Austin University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a Master’s Degree in Elementary Supervision with a Minor in Reading. After graduation, she taught for fifteen years, married her husband, who was a Methodist minister, and eventually moved to Humble, which she still calls home.

Mackenzie Kelly of Austin is focused on civic and public service for her community. Ms. Kelly has served as a senior volunteer firefighter with the Jollyville Fire Department for over eight years. She is involved with the City of Austin Homeland Security Emergency Management Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) as the Board's Communications Director. Mackenzie is furthering her career by working towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from the American Military University. She is a Fellow of the Disaster Science program with the Emergency Management Academy. She is also working on her Associate Emergency Manager Certification from the International Association of Emergency Managers.

Margaret Larsen of Austin is the President and CEO of Special Olympics Texas (SOTX), a position in which she has served for 18 years. She sits on Special Olympics, Inc.'s United States Leadership Council and serves as the Chair of the Government Relations Committee. Representing Special Olympics Texas, she has led national legislative efforts for Special Olympics Hill Day in Washington, D.C. Ms. Larsen formed a special committee to focus on proper terminology and respectful language, subsequently launching a public awareness campaign about the “R-word” that garnered national attention and recognition. With Ms. Larsen’s foresight and drive, today Special Olympics Texas is one of the largest and most respected programs in the world with the participation of more than 44,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Ms. Larsen holds a degree from John Hopkins University, and was a Post Graduate Reader at Exeter College in the Oxford University system.

David Ondich of Burleson is the Human Resources and Disability Specialist within the Human Resources Department at the City of Fort Worth. He works on several key city initiatives related to the recruitment, training and retention of a diverse workforce to include individuals with disabilities. Mr. Ondich has completed coursework for his Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to attending UT Austin, he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Sciences and a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology from UT Southwestern Medical School of Allied Health in Dallas. He provides consultation to the Diversity Advisory Committee to the City Manager, serves as Chair of the Fort Worth Return to Work Committee, and as Staff Liaison to the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities. In 2008, he received The Governor's Trophy for his innovative efforts to employ Texans with disabilities in Fort Worth. In 2009, he received a Barbara Jordan Media Award for a television documentary titled "Reaching Higher: Versie Returns to Work."

Shawn P. Saladin, PhD, CRC, CPM of Edinburg is the Interim Chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. He is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Deaf Rehabilitation for the Department of Rehabilitation at The University of Texas-Pan American and the current Chair of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and past president of the Texas Rehabilitation Association. He has previous work experience with the state of Texas State/Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. He served on the Rehabilitation Council of Texas for six years prior to his appointment to the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.

Kathy S. Strong of Garrison is Executive Director of the Nacogdoches Treatment Center. She is an ex-officio member of the Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities. She is a member of the Leadership Nacogdoches Steering Committee and serves on the Texas State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease - Emphasis on Caregivers. She served as director of an accessible housing project in Nacogdoches and taught special education classes. Ms. Strong received a Bachelor's Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Patty Watson of Flower Mound is the Chief Information Officer at Brinks. Ms. Watson served in the U.S. Air Force. She received a Bachelor's Degree from Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame and a Master Business Administration from the University of Dayton in Ohio.

Staff Members

Angela English, LPC, LMFT, Executive Director

Ms. English is currently the Executive Director of the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities where she plans, directs and coordinates the programmatic goals and all related business of the Committee, including human resources management, staff development and budget management. She speaks to complex disabilities issues, trends and laws and represents the Office of the Governor at various local, state and national functions to promote public awareness and full inclusion of Texans with disabilities. She develops biennial policy recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on issues related to best practices and emerging trends consistent with the full inclusion and participation of Texans with disabilities in ten issue areas, which are; access, communication, education, emergency management, health, housing, recreation, transportation, veterans and employment.

Ms. English's previous experience includes serving for six years as the Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator for the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, providing technical assistance regarding accessibility and disability rights laws. She has 13 years of service in Mental Health Quality Management related to State Hospitals, Community Mental Health Centers and State Supported Living Centers.

She has a Master's degree from Baylor University in Educational Psychology and a Bachelor's Degree from Carson-Newman College in Art/Special Education. Ms. English is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She has teaching degrees in Special Education and Art Education K-12 grades.

In 2010, she was appointed by Janet Napolitano to serve on the [Local, State, Tribal and Federal Preparedness Task Force](#), which was charged with assessing the state of the nation's disaster preparedness and making recommendations. The task force report "*Perspective on Preparedness: Taking Stock Since 9/11*," represents a significant milestone in aligning preparedness leadership, practitioners, and stakeholders to a common vision for future improvements across the Nation. The Perspective on Preparedness report offers an analysis of what preparedness has meant in the United States, both historically and since 9/11, and includes an in-depth analysis of post-9/11 preparedness-related activities in policy and guidance, grants, and capabilities and assessment. The Task Force also provided input into the [Presidential Policy Directive 8 \(PPD8\)](#), the National Preparedness Report, and the [Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment \(THIRA\)](#). Additionally, Ms. English was a member of the [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#) Access and Functional Needs Subcommittee that worked on the Whole Community paradigm and language.

And in March of 2012, Ms. English was selected to attend the [Executive Leaders Program](#) at the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security in Monterey, California. The Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Directorate provides the educational opportunity for our nation's homeland security leaders to develop the strategies, policies and organizational elements needed to defeat terrorism in the United States. In February of 2013, she was selected to attend the Master's Degree Program at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Erin Lawler, JD, MS, Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator

Ms. Lawler has served as the Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator for the Committee since June of 2011. She is a licensed Texas attorney and an experienced mediator. She earned a *Juris Doctor* degree with honors from Notre Dame Law School, a Master of Science with honors from the London School of Economics, and a Bachelor of Arts from American University, where she graduated *phi beta kappa*. In September 2011, Ms. Lawler was appointed to the Disability Issues Committee of the State Bar of Texas. She is a Credentialed Mediator with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association and an attorney-mediator with the Austin Dispute Resolution Center. Ms. Lawler won the Dean's Award from Notre Dame Law School for outstanding work in Non-profit Organizations.

Jo Virgil, MS, Community Outreach and Information Coordinator

Ms. Virgil has served as Community Outreach and Information Coordinator for the Committee since January 2009. Ms. Virgil holds a Master of Journalism degree from the University of North Texas and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Texas Tech University, as well as teacher certification in English and Journalism. Her background includes a position as Community Relations Manager for Barnes & Noble and, before that, as a reporter and columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Her work with Barnes & Noble included planning and implementing events (such as author signings, writing workshops, performances, and other community-related events) and working with local schools, libraries, literacy and arts organizations, and other non-profit organizations to promote literacy as well as to build a sense of community.

Nancy Van Loan, Executive Assistant

Ms. Van Loan is the Executive Assistant for the Committee. Ms. Van Loan has seventeen years experience with the Office of the Governor providing technical support for the Executive Director, Committee members, and staff. She has twenty-one years of service with the State including four years with the Texas Department of Insurance Workers' Compensation Division. She has taken undergraduate courses from Mohave and Pima Community Colleges in Arizona, and the University of Central Texas. Ms. Van Loan served four years in the United States Army Signal Corps and has six years managerial experience in the grocery stores industry.

Dawn Woodall, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Woodall is the Administrative Assistant for the Committee. Ms. Woodall has twelve years experience working for the Texas Legislative Council and other state agencies providing technical support to Executive Directors and staff. Before accepting the position with the Governor's Office, Ms. Woodall worked as a Caseworker Assistant and Executive Assistant for the Texas Department of Family Protective Services. Ms. Woodall has undergraduate studies in the field of psychology.

Ex Officio Members, Representatives and Advisors

Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)

Jon Weizenbaum, Commissioner

Marc Gold, Texas Promoting Independence Initiative

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Debra Wanser, Commissioner

Karissa Garcia, Stakeholder Relations

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

Judge John J. Special, Jr. Commissioner

Peter Hajmasy, Director, Center on Policy, Innovation and Program Coordination

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Kyle Janek, M.D., Commissioner

Frank Genco, Senior Policy Advisor for Long Term Care

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

David L. Lakey, MD, Commissioner

Robyn Strickland, Quality Management and Compliance Unit

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

William H. Kuntz, Jr. Executive Director

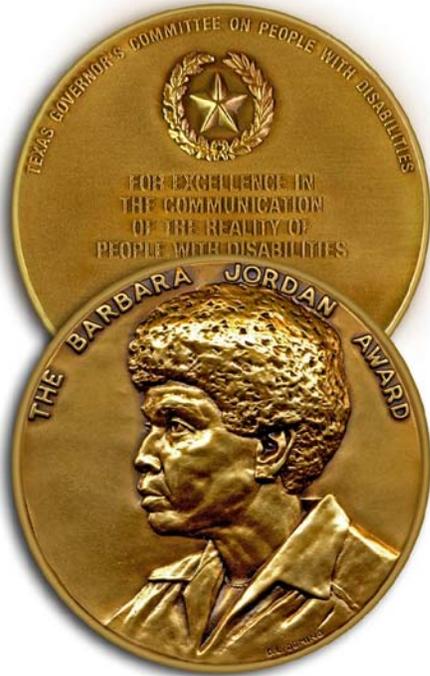
Robert Posey, Manager Architectural Barriers Program

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Tom Pauken, Chairman

George McEntyre, WIA Policy/Program Assistance Supervisor and TWC Veterans Contact

Committee Awards and Programs



The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities has a long history of honoring the achievements of Texans with disabilities by presenting awards for best practices and exemplary endeavors of employers and media professionals. As part of our mission to further opportunities for Texans with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination, we proudly sponsor three annual awards programs.

About the Barbara Jordan Media Awards

In 1982, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities created the media relations program which includes a series of prestigious annual awards recognizing outstanding contributions by individuals and organizations of the communications media. In 1998, the Committee added a high school student subcategory to the Barbara Jordan Awards competition in an effort to encourage and educate a new generation of journalists. Contributions are

recognized for eliminating attitudinal, social, and physical barriers and encouraging accurate and progressive portrayals of people with disabilities in the media.

[The Barbara Jordan Media Awards](#) recognize representatives of the communications media in the fields of print, radio, television, Internet, advertising, photojournalism, public relations, books, and special contributions for increasing public understanding of the abilities and potential of people with disabilities.

2012 Barbara Jordan Media Award Winners (for 2011 submissions)

The 2012 Barbara Jordan Media Awards were hosted by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Office of Disability Services at Texas State University in San Marcos.

Book Category

[*The Boy Who Saved My Life*](#)

Earle P. Martin, author

Entertainment

[*Rollin' with Zach*](#)

Zach Anner, Oprah Winfrey Network



Internet

[*Former Tennis Star Dennis Ralston*](#)

Pam LeBlanc, Austin American-Statesman

Photojournalism

[*Among the Wounded*](#)

Lara Solt, Dallas Morning News

TV Feature

[*Coaching from a Different Perspective*](#)

Shane McAuliffe, KBTX-TV, Bryan

TV Feature, Extended

[*The Baty Bot*](#)

Matt Barrie, Noah Bullard, Peter Hull, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth



TV Documentary

[*Health Needs a Hero*](#)

Jen Ohlson, Arnold Payne, Pathway Productions

TV Public Service Announcement

[*Accessible Parking PSA*](#)

Channel 6, City of Austin

Print Feature

[*The Wonder of It All*](#)

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, *Texas Co-Op Power Magazine*

Print Feature Series

[*Zach's Journey*](#)

Marc Ramirez, Dallas Morning News

Print News

[*Camp Gives People with Disabilities the Skills to Master Bicycling*](#)

Robert Cadwallader, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Student, High School

[*Anything But Bland*](#)

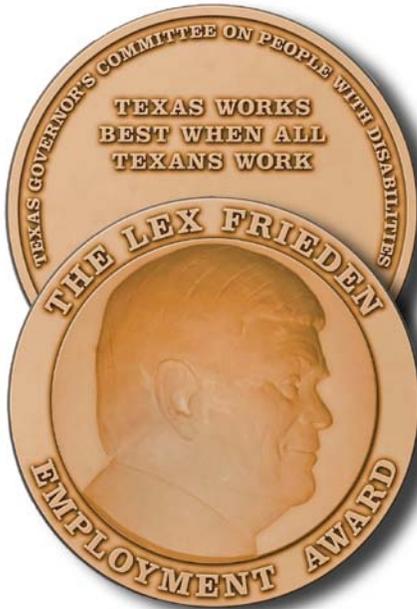
Kelly Stark, North Garland High School, Raider Echo

Student, College

[*Resident Uses Disability to Motivate Others*](#)

Kolten Parker, Texas State University, The University Star

About the [Lex Frieden Employment Awards](#)



Since 1979, the Governor's Committee has highlighted the efforts of employers to hire and retain employees with disabilities, and to recognize best practices affecting employees with disabilities within the workplace. In 2011, the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities announced that the annual employment awards were renamed after disability rights champion and independent living movement leader Lex Frieden, one of the architects of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Frieden is the UT Chancellors Health Fellow on Disability, a professor of biomedical informatics and rehabilitation at UT Health and director of the Independent Living Research Utilization Program (ILRU) at TIRR Memorial Hermann Rehabilitation Hospital. He was appointed by President George W. Bush as chair of the National Council on Disability in 2002. He served an eight-

year term on the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Standard Rules for Disability. Frieden is author or co-author of more than 60 articles on independent living, disability rights and rehabilitation. He has received two Presidential Citations for his work in the field of disability, and was awarded an honorary doctorate in law by the National University of Ireland in 2004.

Annual awards are given in the following categories:

[The Governor's Trophy](#) is the Governor's Committee's highest honor and is awarded to the person who has achieved the highest success in enhancing the empowerment and employment of Texans with disabilities. The Governor's Trophy recognizes long-term commitment and outstanding efforts at both the community and state level.

[Employer Awards](#) are given in four categories - Small Employer (25 or fewer employees), Medium Employer (26 to 500 employees), Large Employer (more than 500 employees), and Non-Profit Employer. Each category serves to recognize employers in Texas who have fostered a diverse and accessible workplace and who have developed innovative ways to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace.

[The Martha Arbuckle Award](#) recognizes the most innovative local committee project, and is presented in memory of Austin's long-time disability advocate Martha Arbuckle.

[The Entrepreneurship Award](#) is awarded to a living entrepreneur with a disability who has shown extraordinary ingenuity and drive to create and sustain a successful business that has created jobs and accessible services.

2012 Lex Frieden Employment Award Winners

The Governor's Trophy

Stephen Booher (Arlington)

The Governor's Trophy is the Governor's Committee's highest honor and is awarded each year to the person who has achieved the highest success in enhancing the empowerment and employment of Texans with disabilities. The Governor's Trophy recognizes long-term commitment and outstanding efforts at both the community and the state level.



Stephen Booher, Organizational Development Specialist in the Workforce Services Department of the City of Arlington, is involved daily in organizations which are at the forefront of the fight for better and continued advancement in all areas of human rights. Since 2008, Mr. Booher has been a board member of Helping Restore Abilities. He is a member of the Arlington Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and, as a member, interacts with the Cowboy Stadium design team on various issues. He has served on the Dallas Mayor's Committee for the

Employment of People with Disabilities and on the Texas Instruments Diversity Network; he coached and financially supported a team to raise money for Special Olympics in the Plane Pull at DFW; as a city employee for the City of Irving, Mr. Booher worked on the Advisory Committee on Disabilities and taught classes on communicating effectively with people with disabilities; he co-chaired the Disability Expo at the Heritage Center; he worked on the plans for an accessible playground and researched other accessible playgrounds in the area. While employed with the cities of Irving and Arlington, Mr. Booher has had direct impact on the creation of services as well as the construction of two barrier-free playgrounds and was able to offer input into the needs of customers with disabilities at the new Cowboy Stadium. Mr. Booher continues to network with key people in the field of disabilities and to stay involved in activities, training, and events.

Entrepreneurship Award

Stacy Zoern, Community Cars, Inc (Pflugerville)

Stacy Zoern, who has Spinal Muscular Atrophy and uses an electric wheelchair, is the CEO of Community Cars, Inc, a corporation that manufactures low-speed electric vehicles that are purpose-built for people in wheelchairs. After finding the Kenguru vehicle online and wanting to purchase one, she learned that the company was not producing vehicles for lack of funding. She has since done everything in her power to bring the Kenguru to the market. She raised \$2.5



million, obtained VISAs for the Hungarian developers to move to the United States, purchased inventory, rented a space for the factory, hired twelve engineers, welders, and other automotive assemblers, and started production. In addition to the direct job creation, her company has spent over \$200,000 with other local businesses in less than one year. In the meantime, she quit her job practicing law to run Community Cars and has put 100% of her personal finances on the line for the success of Community Cars. The entire mission of Community Cars is to bring mobility, independence, and freedom to people with disabilities. The Kenguru is driven from the wheelchair, accessed by a rear ramp and hatchback. With a top speed of 25 mph, its purpose is to make the community accessible by providing people in wheelchairs with a “moped” that gets them to work, school, the store, the movies, their friends' homes, etc, at a cost well below that of a fully modified van.



Large Employer Award

Target – Austin Southwest Greatland store (Austin)

Target’s philosophy regarding employing and advancing Texans with disabilities is simple: Every person deserves a chance to make a difference in another’s life. When Target employs a person for its team, the company is looking for people who want to make the community a better place to live and will make sure the customer’s shopping experience is pleasant and productive. Even though an individual might have a certain disability, they can have a far greater ability to promote the company’s mission: Being Fast, Fun & Friendly. Whether an accommodation involves a team member’s work schedule, mode of personal transportation, use of adaptive equipment, modifying a specific task or embracing the aid of a Job Coach, each person is treated as a valued employee and the managers focus on the abilities of each of their Team Members. Target provides each employee with specific training in areas that best suit their ability to be productive employees. Target has also embraced family members of employees with disabilities by allowing them to attend the monthly Employee Luncheons. All department supervisors go out of their way to make accommodations available whenever possible, such as revising job descriptions to allow a person to maintain employment.

Medium Employer Award

Image Microsystems (Austin)

Image Microsystems’ commitment to community is key driver of the company's success. As part of their community commitment, Image Microsystems sponsors Texas School for the Deaf students through their Career Technology Education Program. By employing people who are deaf or hard of hearing and other students with disabilities, they provide paid internships—giving each student exposure to the world of technology and environmental responsibility. After

graduation, these students are qualified to apply for full time employment. As much as 40% of Image Microsystems' workforce includes employees who have disabilities. Image Microsystems provides an onsite American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter to assist with employment transition, training, and ongoing support. To further promote communication, the company provides several phones capable of Video Relay Services, as well as bilingual (hearing and ASL) services to ensure communication with all employees. All of the company's facilities and services are designed with employees with disabilities in mind. Image Microsystems provides community outreach to promote the hiring of people with disabilities through speaking engagements at various organization meetings and events.



Small Employer Award

Big Lots (Denton)



At Big Lots in Denton, managers openly support the needs, diversity and opportunities for all employees and applicants, partly by being responsive to requests for work experiences from

Denton ISD High School Special Education Department and from the University of North Texas

summer youth program. Big Lots encourages new employees who pass six months of probation employment to consider applying for new openings in customer services or manager positions. All employees learn procedures for reporting any concerns or safety issues and can access anonymous reporting. New employees must pass a series of training prevention topics which focus on safety, workplace harassment and other communications. These are provided in verbal, visual, written, computer



access and in one-to-one question and answer sessions. New employees are offered the option to re-take tests that they did not pass with no negative notation in their file for re-testing and are allowed extended time to learn their job or new tasks with dignity and are respected for their individual learning style. Employees are matched with a mentor with whom they comfortably communicate. New employees are encouraged to advocate for themselves through the mentor to feel more self-empowered. Feedback is often requested. Managers say that customers appreciate the way employees work as a team and all they do to enhance employment prospects in the community.

Non-Profit Employer

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (Houston)

MD Anderson's goals include becoming the "Employer of Choice" for people with disabilities.



Their commitment to equal opportunity hiring practices is demonstrated in their EEO policy statement. MD Anderson worked closely with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation with its Master Plan, and went above and beyond in the upgrades and renovations of restrooms and other accessible elements (drinking fountains, telephones and other items such as interior ramps and automatic doors at double leaf doors, etc.). A new initiative by the organization development team is to expand the organization's mentoring initiative. The range of positions at MD Anderson held by employees with disabilities range from

faculty members to clerical workers, including positions in-between, and both direct and indirect patient care employees. MD Anderson encourages employees to disclose both visible and invisible disabilities. MD Anderson's PeopleFirst Employee Resource Group (ERG), formed to promote a more inclusive work environment for individuals who live with disabilities and to educate all employees about individuals with disabilities in the workplace through education and advocacy, has a membership of 150 employees. Human Resources is collaborating with the ERG to assist with advocating for employees with disabilities to self-identify without fear.

Martha Arbuckle Award for a Local Committee

Employment Alliance for People with Disabilities (Corpus Christi)

Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend in partnership with Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services co-founded the Employment Alliance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) in May 2011. The leadership of the EAPD includes an incredibly diverse, collaborative committee focused on increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and educating employers on how to recruit, hire and retain employees with disabilities. Breaking



through barriers, the EAPD hosted a Job Fair targeted to people with disabilities and open to the public. The first of its kind in the Coastal Bend, the EAPD Job Fair was held at Del Mar College Center for Economic Development in October 2011, in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Leveraging the strengths and resources of the community it serves, the EAPD Job Fair was produced entirely through in-kind donations, which included

public transportation shuttles and accommodations such as large print/Braille, sighted guides and certified ASL Interpreters to guarantee that all attendees had equal access. The EAPD Job Fair helped to create a culture of access and inclusion in the workplace with regional employers by inviting them to join the EAPD, and encouraging them to request specific training and resource information and additional resources relative to the economic benefits of welcoming individuals with disabilities as both employees and customers. The EAPD Job Fair received local media attention that helped to influence and change cultural attitudes and to promote effective workplace practices that ensure that today's workforce is inclusive of all people. The EAPD Job Fair was an outstanding success with over 350 attendees from throughout the Coastal Bend region, most of whom were job seekers with disabilities, and 40 private-sector employers present. The EAPD is set to host the 2nd Annual EAPD Job Fair in October 2012.

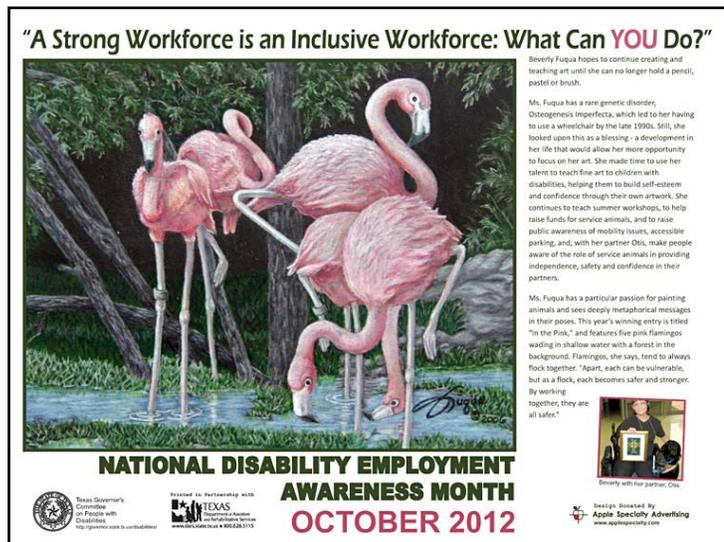
About the *National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Poster Art Competition*



Each October, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities produces a poster celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Artwork for the poster is selected by a submission and judging process which is open to any Texas artist with a disability. There is no age limit or specific theme. Original 2D and 3D art in all media are eligible. There is no entry fee, but all submissions must be accompanied by a signed copy of the submission form.

Once the team of judges has selected a winning piece of art, a professional designer donates her time to create a poster using the current national theme and the winning artwork to create an 18x24-inch poster that is distributed free of charge to businesses and organizations throughout the state, and often to other states by request. The winning artist is invited as a guest at our annual Lex Frieden Employment Awards to autograph copies of the poster for attendees.

Each year, the poster is framed and displayed, along with the original artwork, in the office of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, and is occasionally presented as an exhibit with all the past years' winning art and posters.



About the [APA/GCPD Accessibility Awards](#)

Beginning in 2010, the Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) partnered with the [Accessibility Professionals Association](#) (APA), formerly known as the Texas Registered Accessibility Specialists Association (TRASA), to create an Accessibility Awards program that recognizes businesses and organizations that go significantly above and beyond the legal requirements of both physical and service accessibility for people with disabilities. Nominations are submitted by accessibility specialists, building owners or managers, or by appreciative citizens. Site visits are made by APA professionals to inspect physical accessibility and by professionals familiar with disability issues to inspect for service accessibility (friendliness of staff, easily accessible accommodations, innovations such as braille menus, etc.).

Winners of the award are selected in several different categories, including Recreation, Education, Medical and Health Services, Restaurant and Entertainment, and others. Each year the winners are recognized as part of APA’s annual meeting in January.

2012 Accessibility Award Winners



Texas A&M University Memorial Student Center (College Station)

401 Joe Routh Boulevard

Owner: Texas A&M University; Sherry Wine, Director of Operations

Design Professional: Perkins & Will Architect / Dallas – Richard Miller AIA, primary contact

Construction Team: Vaughn Construction / Houston

Originally built in 1951, the Memorial Student Center (MSC) is popularly known as “The Living Room of Texas A&M.” Dedicated to Aggies who have given or risked their lives in

the military, the MSC underwent an extensive expansion and renovation in early 2012, focusing on the intent to preserve the original design.

Both the new 100,000 square foot expansion and the 340,000 renovation incorporate a dedicated focus on a sense of community and accessibility to all; in fact, people with disabilities and a professional accessibility consultant were employed to help with design plans and to provide input on everything from physical accessibility, to fully accessible signage, to staff training on disability etiquette. The physical layout utilizes abundant natural light, open floor plans, wide corridors. All exterior entrances have automatic openers and their clearances exceed legal requirements. Attractive ramps and paved walkways turned the original jumble of stairs, steps and obstacles into a fully accessible



Attractive ramps and paved walkways turned the original jumble of stairs, steps and obstacles into a fully accessible

facility, including the courtyard. Because of above and beyond attention to service accessibility, the recent evacuation of the A&M campus due to a bomb threat was successful in making sure that all students, including those with various disabilities, were able to be safely evacuated in a short time.



White Rock Hills Branch Library (Dallas)

9220 Ferguson Road

Owner: City of Dallas Public Works and Transportation – Terry Williams, City of Dallas

Design Professional: HOK Architects & Engineers – Stephen Brookover AIA

Construction Team: JC Commercial – Jeremy Keller, Project Engineer

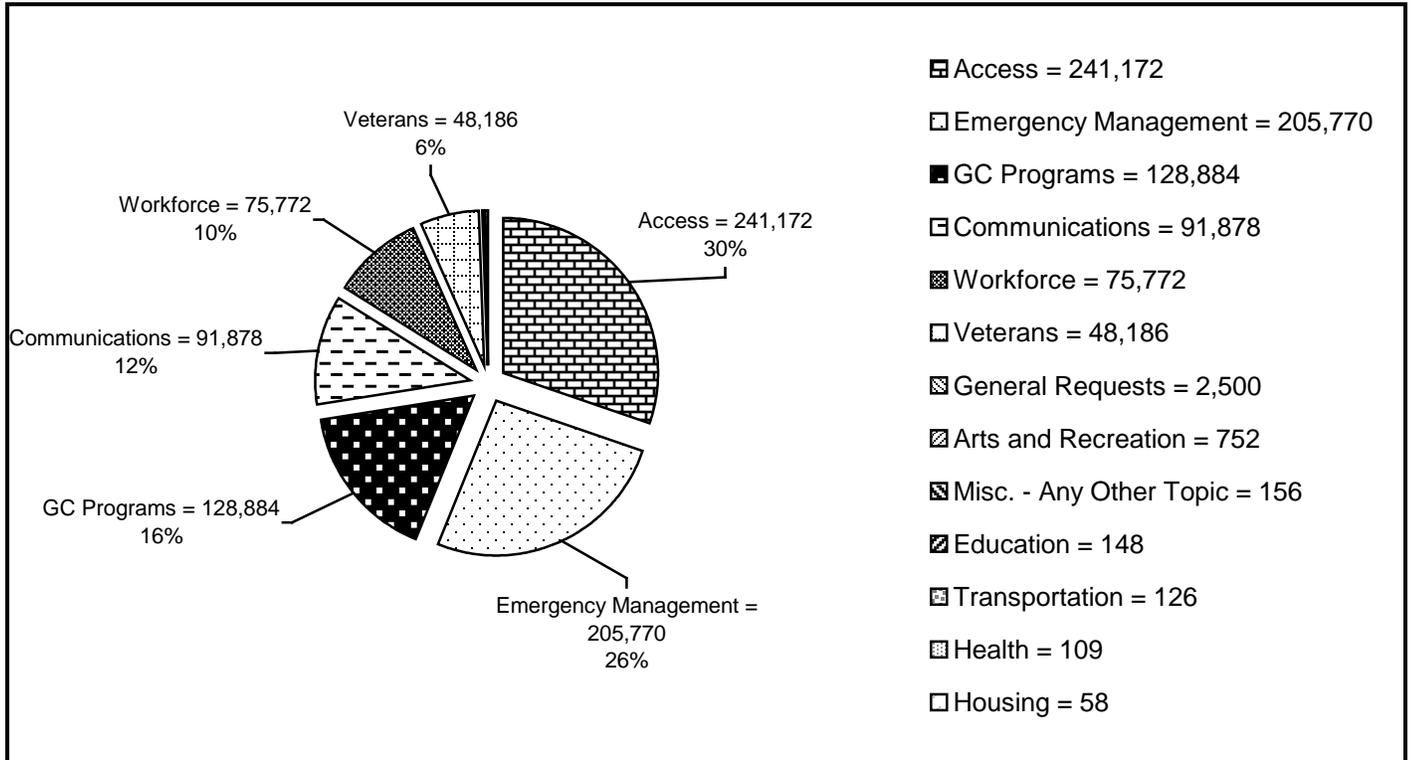
The new construction of the Dallas Library’s White Rock Hills Branch focused on both environmental impact and on full accessibility. Interior and exterior doors open

automatically and the Information Desk is situated at a functional height for accessibility to all. Aisles in the library are wide enough for easy navigation for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. The building design allows for excellent natural lighting. The staff is specifically trained in People First language and disability etiquette, including appropriate interaction with service animals, familiarity with the ADA and a respect for privacy issues. Large screens are available for self-checkout, and books throughout the library are in easily reachable range – none on very high or bottom shelves. The branch carries a wide variety of audio books and Large Print books. During the construction design, comments were solicited from a librarian with a disability to give a wider perspective on making the branch library accessible to all.



Technical Assistance Provided to Constituents During 2012

The Committee structures its work into ten broad issue areas. The following statistics were gathered from the GCPD Constituent Tracking System for reporting to the Legislative Budget Board. For the calendar year, staff responded to **1,060** personalized requests from citizens and provided the following total number of instances of technical assistance: **795,811**.



Detail of Technical Assistance Provided to Constituents During 2012

Issue Areas / Subtopics

Instances

Committee Programs

128,884 Instances

Local Committees and Awards (via GovDelivery)	42,581
Annual Survey (original dissemination & analysis distribution)	31,890
Barbara Jordan Media Awards	28,166
Disability-related Info Share (i.e.: announcements, events)	8,302
NDEAM Poster or Proclamation	5,814
APA Awards (Accessibility Professionals Assn.)	5,273
Employment Awards	2,913
Disability History / ADA Anniversary (proclamation)	1,737
Local Committees	1,228
ADA Roundtable	592

Policy Recommendations	214
Quarterly Committee Meetings	148
Other	22
Courtesy Parking Reminders	2
ADA Listserv (daily electronic newsletter)	1
Scoop on Reporting about People w/ Disabilities training package	1

Access

241,472 Instances

ADA and Accessibility/Disability Rights (via GovDelivery)	237,844
Voting	2,182
ADA Accessibility Guidelines (federal)	1,261
Public Accommodations & Services (ADA Title III)	70
Architectural Barriers / Texas Accessibility Standards (state)	29
DOJ – Complaints, Discrimination or Info	24
Assistance Animal /Rights & Training	18
Local & State Governments (ADA Title II)	16
Legal Questions	16
Assistance Animal Discrimination – referral to DOJ	9
Other	3

Arts and Recreation

752 Instances

Member Activities / Public Awareness	725
Promoting Inclusion or Accessibility	18
Other	5
Construction at Parks & Venues	3
Accessibility of Existing Venue	1

Communications

91,878 Instances

Accessible Technology (via GovDelivery)	79,776
Assistive & Information Technology	8,612
Federal Communications Commission / Section 508 (federal)	1,840
Techlunch (Google group postings & meetings)	874
Member Activities / Public Awareness	703
Accessibility Council of Texas	32
Website Accessibility	31
Other	10

Education

148 Instances

Member Activities / Public Awareness	101
Reasonable Accommodation	14
Texas Education Agency (state)	13
Other	7
Transition Planning / Advocacy	4
Learning Disabilities	4
Loans, Grants, Scholarships	3
U.S. Department of Education (Section 504 referral)	2

Emergency Management

205,770 Instances

Emergency Management (via GovDelivery)	204,813
Member Activities / Public Awareness	376
TDEM / Texas DPS	298
Resources or Training	154
Communication / Information Technology	93
FEMA	27
Personal Planning	6
Other	2
Local Shelters & Transportation	1

Health

109 Instances

Other	19
Insurance	16
Social Security (SSI, SSDI)	15
Alzheimer's	13
Financial Assistance	11
DARS Programs (DBS, DDS, DHHS, DRS, ECI)	9
DADS (services & support)	9
DSHS (programs & services)	8
2-1-1 Hotline (available community services)	5
HHSC Ombudsman Referral	4

Housing

58 Instances

Accessible Housing / Reasonable Accommodation	16
Discrimination	11
Modification or Repair	9
Affordable Housing	8
Financial Assistance	5
Other	4
Tax Exemptions	3
Texas Dept of Housing & Community Affairs (state)	2

Transportation

126 Instances

Placards or License Plates	39
Parking Lots / # of Spaces / Signage	17
Laws & Fines	16
Drivers License / Resident ID	25
Local Service or Taxicabs	7
Vehicle Modification	4
Financial Assistance	5
Volunteer Parking Programs	6
Other	7

Veterans

48,186 Instances

Veterans with Disabilities (GovDelivery)	48,166
Veterans Affairs, US Dept of (federal)	12
Texas Veterans Commission (state)	3
Requesting Services	2
Educational Benefits	2
Mental Health	1

Workforce

75,772 Instances

Employment of People with Disabilities (GovDelivery)	74,210
Member Activities / Public Awareness	1,010
Work Incentive Programs	260
EEOC Discrimination / Complaints (federal)	128
Other	109

Entrepreneur & Business	24
TWC Employment Assistance	16
Reasonable Accommodation (JAN)	10
TWC Civil Rights Div. – Complaints	4
Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	1

General Requests

2,500 Instances

Staff Presentations & Conferences	1,696
Members or Ex Officios	655
Legislative Inquiries	46
Other	34
Appointments Process for Potential Members	13
Resources Guide	13
General Financial Assistance (multi issues)	12
What does GCPD do?	10
Legal Assistance	10
Statistics	5
Website & Publications (GCPD)	4
Texas Benefits for People with Disabilities	2

Miscellaneous

156 Instances

Referred to OOG Constituent Communications Division	90
Non-Disability or Committee Related (referral to other agencies)	57
Referred to Information & Referral	5
Any Other Topic	4

Total Instances of Technical Assistance Provided: 795,811

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Policy and Legislative Recommendations for 83rd Session

Introduction

In its enabling statute the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities [*The Committee*] in Section 115.009 (3) of the [Human Resources Code](#) requires that the Governor's Committee shall: "submit to the governor, and to the legislature, a report that includes [...] (c) any recommended changes in state laws relating to persons with disabilities." The Committee is pleased to present 140 recommendations across ten issue areas: access, communications, education, emergency management, health, housing, recreation, transportation, veterans and workforce. These recommendations represent eighteen months of effort and draw from several areas of constituent and stakeholder input, including high-level research, constituent correspondence and survey responses, and Committee members' own subject matter expertise. To prepare these recommendations, Committee staff and members reviewed expert research and emerging trends at the State and national level and were guided by disability-related House and Senate interim charges. Over the course of the biennium, staff members responded to over 2,000 requests for technical assistance on disability issues in Texas; staff members were then able to analyze the data compiled from these requests to craft recommendations responsive to the issues that have significantly affected Texans over the last two years.

The Committee feels strongly that its recommendations should be based on data which identifies the needs of Texans with disabilities. The Committee conducted a Citizen Survey on Issues Important to Texans with Disabilities and received 1,131 constituent responses, including 1,691 open-ended comments across the Committee's ten issue areas. The Committee considered input from Texans with a wide variety of disabilities including physical, developmental, mental, sensory and cognitive disabilities. During the Committee's quarterly meetings throughout the biennium, Committee members examined disability issues from their distinct areas of subject matter expertise and shared information about trends in their local areas throughout Texas.

The survey led to a better understanding of the current issues affecting Texans with disabilities and to the formation of the reports policy recommendations. The staff and members also collected and reviewed data from its database regarding disability research, emerging trends, the Texas House/Senate interim studies and the analysis of calls and emails from citizens for technical assistance in its database.

Our recommendations strive to leverage strategic federal, state, public and private partnerships to develop resources, reduce fragmentation in the service delivery system, address needs in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, provide choice, and implement strategies that help people remain independent and involved in community life.

Texas Governor's Committee Citizens' Input Survey

The Committee implemented a Texas Governor's Committee Citizens' Input Survey from July to September of 2012 related to its ten issue areas. The survey asked citizens to provide input into the policy recommendations process and rank issues that had been identified by the Committee

members for the 83rd Legislative Session. Citizens were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended responses to any issue important to them. There were 1,131 citizens who responded to the survey. [*Full survey responses available by request.*]

Citizens identified the following as issues of “high importance” to them for the upcoming session and “strongly agreed” with the following concepts: (ranked in order of importance)

- Access to efficient and quality healthcare **(90.1 percent)**
- Access to affordable healthcare **(89.9 percent)**
- Ensure that emergency notification and warnings are provided in multiple formats, including formats that are accessible to people who are blind, deaf, hard-of-hearing, or use American Sign Language **(85.7 percent)**
- Increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities **(85.6 percent)**
- Accessible evacuation transportation **(84.9 percent)**
- Adequate, efficient Special Education programs, services and procedures **(84.7 percent)**
- Emergency planning processes that include people with disabilities **(84.2 percent)**
- Ensure appropriate (educational) accommodations are available during testing **(83.2 percent)**
- Education of employers about disability rights law related to employment **(82.3 percent)**
- Accessible post-disaster housing **(82.2 percent)**
- Integrate people with disabilities in the planning process for emergencies at the State and local level **(82.0 percent)**
- More resources and support for family caregivers, including respite services **(80.0 percent)**
- Strengthening existing anti-bullying laws in schools related to students with disabilities **(79.1 percent)**
- Aging-in-place (initiatives that would allow older Texans to remain in the community and homes, rather than in an institution or nursing care facility) **(78.6 percent)**
- Affordability of accessible, safe housing **(77.5 percent)**
- Increase financial assistance for people with disabilities to acquire assistive technology, including hearing aids **(77.3 percent)**
- Increased services for veterans with traumatic brain injuries **(76.1 percent)**
- Availability of community-based, integrated housing for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities **(76.0 percent)**
- Transit-oriented development (developing communities with accessible mass transportation to goods and services and a variety of pedestrian-friendly options) **(75.6 percent)**
- Affordability of accessible and timely transportation **(75.1 percent)**
- Support collaborative efforts between State and federal agencies to provide long-term care for Veterans with disabilities **(75.0 percent)**

- Improve availability of information on services for Veterans with disabilities, including job placements **(75.0 percent)**
- Increase training for medical professionals about Post-Traumatic Stress and traumatic brain injuries **(74.4 percent)**
- Increase availability of caregiver services of Veterans with disabilities **(74.3 percent)**
- Increased capacity for education providers in Positive Behavior Support training **(73.9 percent)**
- Accessible, affordable and safe housing and communities **(73.4 percent)**
- Enhance the physical environment for communities that are walk-able, roll-able, bike-able, which encourages physical activity, social engagement and aging-in place **(72.8 percent)**
- Increase affordability of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices **(72.7 percent)**
- Increase the participation of people with disabilities in State government and in their communities through the use of accessible technology **(72.5 percent)**
- Accessibility of information on State government websites (for example, information related to renewing or applying for a driver's license) **(71.8 percent)**
- Physical access to public buildings, programs and services **(67.6 percent)**
- Encourage the creation of complete streets (streets that safely allow for pedestrian, bicycle and scooter traffic) **(69.4 percent)**
- Amend programs' and services' participation policies for full inclusion of people with disabilities in recreational opportunities **(69.2 percent)**

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Overview of 2013-2015 Policy Recommendations

ACCESS

- Recommendation **1.1**: Encourage the principles of “Livable Communities” in the long-range regional planning and development of communities in Texas, including emphasizing accessible transportation options and “Complete Streets.”
- Recommendation **1.2**: Promote safe and accessible mobility options for drivers, public transportation vehicles and patrons, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, operations and maintenance activities and products conducted at the city, county or State level.
- Recommendation **1.3**: Support local and state implementation and development plans for compliance with the accessibility provisions in the revised ADA and TAS standards, and an ongoing method of assessing compliance.
- Recommendation **1.4**: Encourage voluntary compliance with the ADA and TAS by creating incentives for compliance.
- Recommendation **1.5**: Require all polling places for voting to fulfill the legal requirements to be fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Recommendation **1.6**: Explore ways to locate polling places that are on accessible transportation routes.
- Recommendation **1.7**: Explore the use of new technologies that will increase accessibility for voters with disabilities.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Recommendation **2.1**: Encourage the use of accessible technology to reach traditionally underserved populations, including people with disabilities, especially through the use of social media.
- Recommendation **2.2**: Foster the development of accessible mainstream technology and promote its adoption by people with disabilities, especially for employment, as well as civic and community engagement.
- Recommendation **2.3**: Promote the awareness of and access to assistive technologies, including mainstream technologies that have a demonstrated track record of meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

- Recommendation **2.4**: Support programs that increase the availability and affordability of accessible information and communication technologies, including high-speed Internet service, for all Texans.
- Recommendation **2.5**: Provide publicly available educational resources for companies and developers to support the business case for, and the accessible development of, information and communication technology, including examples of market demand, business cases, business and technical requirements, sample code, training and testing tools.
- Recommendation **2.6**: Encourage information sharing within the technological development community about emerging assistive technologies and best practices.
- Recommendation **2.7**: Promote the development of standards of professional competence for accessibility practitioners in the area of information and communications technology.
- Recommendation **2.8**: Support the inclusion of accessibility and Universal Design topics in the higher education curricula for computer science, engineering, design, and architecture.
- Recommendation **2.9**: Encourage Texas State agencies and state institutions of higher education to enhance opportunities for participation by people with disabilities in government, the workforce, and the community through the use of technologies enabled by ubiquitous access to broadband, “cloud computing,” and related technologies.
- Recommendation **2.10**: Promote the installation of hearing loops in places of public accommodations that have public address systems, spoken broadcasts or other audio programs.
- Recommendation **2.11**: Support public programs and encourage private programs that assist Texans in the acquisition and the proper use of assistive hearing technologies, especially those with embedded telecoils.
- Recommendation **2.12**: Promote awareness and knowledge of American Sign Language (ASL) as a secondary language.
- Recommendation **2.13**: Encourage the inclusion of People-First language in the curricula of mass communication and journalism programs in Texas institutions of higher education.

EDUCATION

- Recommendation **3.1**: Require electronic textbooks and the [Virtual School Network in Texas](#) be developed and maintained in such a way that students with a variety of disabilities have equal access to all materials and instructions by teachers.

- Recommendation **3.2**: Require Texas public schools to develop and use a centralized [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) that will ensure commitment to procuring accessible products and materials.
- Recommendation **3.3**: Build on the success of Western Governors University and continue to explore the intelligent use of technology to develop innovative, accessible learning models and personal educational pathways, while maintaining standards of educational excellence and student-teacher interaction.
- Recommendation **3.4**: Educate teaching professionals on the resources available related to electronic textbooks and accessible technology options.
- Recommendation **3.5**: Require the successful completion of Prevention and Management of Aggressive Behavior (PMAB) or similar training for all school district personnel who are likely to interact with students with disabilities.
- Recommendation **3.6**: Establish a review panel of educators, diagnosticians and administrators to review the appropriateness of each case of restraint or seclusion in consultation with the student and his or her family, including how the incident could have been avoided.
- Recommendation **3.7**: Utilize the existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process to address bullying prevention.
- Recommendation **3.8**: Investigate the effects of zero tolerance policies on students with diagnosed emotional disabilities and whether modification of the application of zero tolerance policies would be appropriate for such students.
- Recommendation **3.9**: Authorize prosecutors to request information related to a student offender's eligibility for special education services and information related to previous disciplinary actions already taken against the offender.
- Recommendation **3.10**: Ensure that accommodations stipulated for a student in the student's IEP are provided for in all test-taking scenarios.
- Recommendation **3.11**: Explore creative ways to provide testing accommodations related to post-secondary programs and professional certifications.
- Recommendation **3.12**: Explore ways to increase accessible physical activity for all students, incorporating outdoor and nature activities.
- Recommendation **3.13**: Explore use of volunteer health care practitioners in Texas public schools.
- Recommendation **3.14**: Support efforts that will increase the number of clinical low vision and orientation and mobility evaluations for Texas students with the goal of eventually providing evaluations to all students with visual impairments in Texas.
- Recommendation **3.15**: Promote collaboration between school districts and State agencies related to comprehensive transition planning, including planning related to further

education, employment, housing, and independent living, for young adults with disabilities.

- Recommendation **3.16**: Direct the Texas Education Agency to create a Transition Specialist Training Program that is consistent across all districts and that provides comprehensive training across issue areas relevant to transitioning students.
- Recommendation **3.17**: Create a comprehensive guide for transitioning students with disabilities and family members, updated biennially, that outlines the services provided by Texas State agencies and private partners, includes information on applying for services, and is presented in a print version and an online, accessible version.
- Recommendation **3.18**: Develop outcome-based transition standards which build in accountability on the delivery of services.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Recommendation **4.1**: Ensure that all training courses for emergency management professionals address the requirements of people with disabilities and people with access and functional needs.
- Recommendation **4.2**: Ensure that Texas Citizen Corps, Citizen Corps Councils, and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) activities reflect the Whole Community concepts with full inclusion of Texans with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.
- Recommendation **4.3**: Facilitate Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) initiatives in Texas with full inclusion and participation of Texans with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.
- Recommendation **4.4**: Encourage all State Health and Human Service agencies providing services to Texans with disabilities to discuss emergency preparedness and evacuation planning.
- Recommendation **4.5**: Require local emergency managers to integrate local residents with disabilities as active participants in the integrated planning and recovery process.
- Recommendation **4.6**: Require State and local disaster jurisdictions to provide effective, accessible and timely public alert warnings.
- Recommendation **4.7**: Invest resources in individual and community efforts to facilitate the overall resiliency of the community.
- Recommendation **4.8**: Support the use of information sharing and the use of developing emerging technologies to advance emergency management capabilities.

- Recommendation **4.9**: Explore ways for emergency management and healthcare professionals to use the power of social media tools such as Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, crowdsourcing, crisis mapping and others to create avenues for real-time information gathering during active disasters.
- Recommendation **4.10**: Explore the use of a Disability Virtual Operations Support Team to provide technical assistance for issues related to people with disabilities and access and functional needs in disasters using various forms of social media.
- Recommendation **4.11**: Ensure sufficient communications that employ both high tech and low-tech capabilities in the event of a disaster in order to reach all audiences.
- Recommendation **4.12**: Expand, enhance, and increase the use of social media in non-disaster times to ensure public awareness of community preparedness for all hazards in Texas.
- Recommendation **4.13**: Utilize charitable and humanitarian giving via smart phones for disasters in Texas.
- Recommendation **4.14**: Utilize technology to provide accessible webinars, materials and reports relevant to emergency management and issues related to Texans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **4.15**: Encourage State enforcement of guidelines for broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite television services to comply with the equal access to public warnings requirement for the [Emergency Alert System](#).
- Recommendation **4.16**: Encourage the Texas Association of Broadcasters to educate programming distributors, broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite television services on their [legal obligation](#) to make emergency information accessible to people with hearing and vision disabilities.
- Recommendation **4.17**: Require State and local emergency management professionals to comply with their legal obligations to provide effective communication to Texans with disabilities and to people with access and functional needs.
- Recommendation **4.18**: Support efforts to establish a Youth Preparedness Council, including youth with disabilities in Texas.
- Recommendation **4.19**: Support efforts in Texas public schools to educate all students, including students with disabilities, on emergency preparedness and planning for their community.
- Recommendation **4.20**: Strengthen existing Texas law to require Texas schools to create multi-hazard, comprehensive emergency preparedness plans that include children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.
- Recommendation **4.21**: Promote efforts to infuse emergency management principles and life skills across the entire educational experience to empower individuals, including children and youth.

- Recommendation **4.22**: Support the adoption of digital, interoperable, Next-Generation 9-1-1 services across the state that are capable of interacting with those in need with voice, TTY, SMS, and real-time text.
- Recommendation **4.23**: Explore ways to increase nursing home and congregate living preparedness, mitigation and recovery during disasters.
- Recommendation **4.24**: Encourage the use of tornado shelters in Texas for congregate living facilities in historically tornado-prone areas.
- Recommendation **4.25**: Map at-risk populations in settings where significant numbers of Texans with disabilities live together, such as long-term care and assisted living facilities, schools of special education, hospitals, community mental health centers, group homes, [State Supported Living Centers](#) and [State Hospitals](#).
- Recommendation **4.26**: Ensure that providers of various home and community-based health-related services receive the same priority as ‘health care personnel’ for vaccinations during a pandemic event.
- Recommendation **4.27**: Ensure that prioritization of debris removal and utility restoration is provided to areas that serve people with disabilities in congregate and residential living facilities.
- Recommendation **4.28**: Examine ways the State can promptly reimburse public organizations that exhausted critical resources during disasters for any donated equipment, food or medical supplies.
- Recommendation **4.29**: Rebuild any infrastructure destroyed during a disaster in an accessible manner, to the greatest extent possible, using the newly adopted [2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines \(ADAAG\)](#).
- Recommendation **4.30**: Require a disability-focused performance evaluation and assessment for all State exercises and disaster responses as standard operating procedure for after-action reports.
- Recommendation **4.31**: Explore the use of [telemedicine](#) for emergency management response to natural or disease-related disasters.
- Recommendation **4.32**: Support the development of electronic health record systems to be used in conjunction with telemedicine to assist in disaster health management.

HEALTH

- Recommendation **5.1**: Support the universal design of medical facilities and examination tables, diagnostic equipment and devices to benefit all people, including people with various types of disabilities.

- Recommendation **5.2**: Promote education among medical service providers about legal requirements for accessibility of medical facilities, including the use of reasonable accommodations to ensure that Texans with disabilities receive prompt care in a setting that respects their dignity.
- Recommendation **5.3**: Support health care reform in Texas that would increase the number of insured Texans while maintaining access to quality medical care with a strong emphasis on prevention and individual choice.
- Recommendation **5.4**: Support efforts to help small employers offer health insurance to their employees.
- Recommendation **5.5**: Encourage a regulatory environment that allows for “disruptive innovations” in health care delivery that will enhance affordability of health care for all Texans.
- Recommendation **5.6**: Support integrated initiatives in chronic disease prevention and treatment that promote overall wellness of Texans.
- Recommendation **5.7**: Invest resources in the continued development of technology that improves individuals’ ability to self-monitor chronic health conditions and live independently.
- Recommendation **5.8**: Establish a long-term plan to develop accessible community-based programs to increase physical activity and improve nutrition throughout the state to reduce chronic disabilities caused by obesity.
- Recommendation **5.9**: Implement community programs, services and education throughout Texas to promote the cessation of smoking and other tobacco use and to address the need for reduction in potential alcoholism.
- Recommendation **5.10**: Increase the safety and affordability of care within institutions, including State Supported Living Centers, State Hospitals, and Intermediate Care Facilities.
- Recommendation **5.11**: Increase support for home and community-based care for all Texans with disabilities, whether they are recipients of Medicaid or not.
- Recommendation **5.12**: Allow Medicaid funding to be spent on home and community-based care, such as [Community First Choice](#) options.
- Recommendation **5.13**: Retool programs and regulations to enable people to access the services they need to live independently without creating financial hardship for the family.
- Recommendation **5.14**: Support ongoing and expedited implementation of the activities outlined in the [2010-2015 Texas State Plan on Alzheimer’s Disease](#).

- Recommendation **5.15**: Explore the use of [telemedicine](#) to assist healthcare practitioners as a tool to serve the increasing numbers of people with disabilities in Texas.
- Recommendation **5.16**: Explore the use of the medical home model for Texans.
- Recommendation **5.17**: Promote workplace-friendly policies and practices for those in the workforce who are also acting as long-term caregivers.
- Recommendation **5.18**: Support early intervention and therapeutic treatments for Texans experiencing mental illness.
- Recommendation **5.19**: Encourage a multi-faceted, coordinated plan between State authorities, county jails, and public and private mental health authorities/providers to diagnose and treat offenders with mental illness in the most appropriate, therapeutic setting.
- Recommendation **5.20**: Encourage the development of programs to facilitate the early identification and diagnoses of mental illnesses and linkages to appropriate and effective treatments.
- Recommendation **5.21**: Support continued efforts to implement the August 2010 Texas Department of State Health Services Continuity of Care Task Force Report [recommendations](#).
- Recommendation **5.22**: Support continued implementation of jail diversion programs and specialty mental health courts that prevent expensive incarcerations and allow for Texans with mental illness to receive appropriate treatment in the community.

HOUSING

- Recommendation **6.1**: Encourage localities to identify and address building codes and zoning regulations that lead to increased housing costs.
- Recommendation **6.2**: Encourage housing subsidies and other initiatives that increase the affordability of housing for Texans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **6.3**: Explore effective plans, policies, and practices for supportive housing that coordinate with community living and long-term care supports across State systems, using a consumer-directed approach.
- Recommendation **6.4**: Support State efforts that would drive funding toward services provided in the community, rather than services only available in institutions.
- Recommendation **6.5**: Encourage community integration of Texans in supportive housing by coordinating support services, housing, and transportation so people are able to

participate in the social, economic, educational, and recreational activities available through community living.

- Recommendation **6.6**: Encourage the promulgation of local visitability ordinances, which include basic accessibility requirements in the construction of certain single-family homes or duplexes.
- Recommendation **6.7**: Continue to make funds available through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to low-income Texans with disabilities for home modifications for accessibility.
- Recommendation **6.8**: Encourage private industry and the nonprofit sector to assist with home modifications for accessibility to low-income Texans with disabilities and Texas Veterans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **6.9**: Improve enforcement of fair housing disability rights, including ensuring that all agencies at the local and State levels affirmatively further fair housing for people with disabilities by reviewing and eliminating obstacles to accessible housing.
- Recommendation **6.10**: Encourage awareness of fair housing principles, especially requirements of reasonable accommodation.

RECREATION

- Recommendation **7.1**: Promote the rights and preferences of people with disabilities in the design and development of recreational services, programs, facilities, and functions, and encourage prompt compliance with the revised [2010 federal accessibility guidelines for recreational facilities](#).
- Recommendation **7.2**: Increase awareness of new requirements in effect on March 15, 2011 and March 15, 2012 from the Department of Justice regulations to Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, in particular requirements that entities permit the use of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices in all areas open to pedestrians, including walking and hiking trails.
- Recommendation **7.3**: Incorporate [universal design and accessibility](#) into the long-range planning of State parks, public beaches and other recreational opportunities for Texans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **7.4**: Encourage large public venues to incorporate family restrooms as an accessible amenities option.
- Recommendation **7.5**: Encourage travel agencies, hotels, and other providers of travel and recreation activities to go above and beyond the minimum legal requirements of

accessibility to create an atmosphere that is usable and welcoming to people with disabilities.

- Recommendation **7.6**: Promote the creation and development of adult playgrounds and multigenerational playgrounds that will encourage physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.

TRANSPORTATION

- Recommendation **8.1**: Explore high speed rail options that include maximum accessibility requirements with focus on intelligent system technologies.
- Recommendation **8.2**: Encourage communities in Texas to implement long term strategies for transit-oriented, mixed use development that would provide accessible, safe, reliable, and affordable transportation choices for Texans with disabilities in order to obtain employment, healthcare, housing and other needed services.
- Recommendation **8.3**: Encourage local public transit programs to direct funding to improve accessible program design, including rural paratransit programs.
- Recommendation **8.4**: Support State and local government efforts for aggressive coordination of accessible and affordable transportation, resources and services for Texans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **8.5**: Promote the elements of transit-oriented development, livable communities and complete street concepts in Texas.
- Recommendation **8.6**: Encourage the principles of Livable Communities in the long range regional planning and development of communities in Texas, including accessible transportation options.
- Recommendation **8.7**: Encourage public and private entities to voluntarily increase the percentage of accessible parking spaces above the federal minimum guidelines.
- Recommendation **8.8**: Support legislation that would ban the use of hand-held wireless communication devices for text-based communication while operating a motor vehicle.

VETERANS

- Recommendation **9.1**: Increase access for female veterans to gender-specific health services including mental health trauma care.
- Recommendation **9.2**: Support public and private initiatives in Texas to screen returning veterans for Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress and make information and resources available that are necessary for rehabilitation, transition, and return to work.

- Recommendation **9.3**: Support legislation that would provide increased resources to the Office of Acquired Brain Injury and the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council.
- Recommendation **9.4**: Develop a multi-agency, comprehensive long-term strategy in Texas to address the mental health needs of current and returning veterans.
- Recommendation **9.5**: Encourage Texas Medical Schools to train physicians in physical and psychosocial implications of compression injuries.
- Recommendation **9.6**: Explore efforts to educate employers on the benefits of using qualified/trained individuals such as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors to provide job placement services to veterans with disabilities and encourage collaboration with education and federal organizations with similar missions.
- Recommendation **9.7**: Develop a comprehensive psychosocial screening process for current and returning veterans that could help identify veterans who are at high risk of homelessness due to a physical, mental or cognitive disability.
- Recommendation **9.8**: Support efforts to develop a continuum of housing options for returning veterans.
- Recommendation **9.9**: Create a marketing and information program for returning veterans that educates them on all services available in Texas through the Texas Veterans Commission.
- Recommendation **9.10**: Foster efforts to utilize social media and the Internet to provide a communication network of services for veterans with disabilities.
- Recommendation **9.11**: Promote the use of accessible and usable technology to help veterans self-assess what services and resources are available to them through the Texas Veterans Commission.
- Recommendation **9.12**: Support the collaborative efforts of state and federal agencies to improve timeliness, ease of application, and delivery of services and benefits to Texas veterans.
- Recommendation **9.13**: Promote the use of telemedicine to assist in providing health and mental health services to current and returning veterans in Texas.
- Recommendation **9.14**: Explore ways to promote employment of current and returning veterans in Texas.
- Recommendation **9.15**: Support efforts to provide accessible transportation for veterans to and from VA medical facilities, especially in rural areas.
- Recommendation **9.16**: Encourage agencies with job placement components to link veteran services websites to their websites to meet all the complex needs of today's veterans.

- Recommendation **9.17**: Support programs and services for peer-to-peer interactions of returning veterans, including peer-to-peer counseling services.
- Recommendation **9.18**: Support efforts to decrease the time related to processing VA disability-related claims.
- Recommendation **9.19**: Support long-term planning efforts related to the needs of an aging veteran population with severe medical needs in Texas.

WORKFORCE

- Recommendation **10.1**: Encourage employers to promote full inclusion in the workplace, including through the provision of reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Recommendation **10.2**: Expand tax incentives for employers to hire and retain people with disabilities.
- Recommendation **10.3**: Develop an educational campaign to improve employers' knowledge about the financial benefits of hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Recommendation **10.4**: Encourage accessible emerging workforce technologies.
- Recommendation **10.5**: Ensure all State and local government websites provide a fully accessible job application process.
- Recommendation **10.6**: Include businesses owned by people with disabilities in the State's definition of [Historically Underutilized Businesses](#) (HUBs).
- Recommendation **10.7**: Encourage the [Texas Workforce Investment Plan](#) to utilize existing online resources to educate additional staff on placement needs and reasonable accommodations.
- Recommendation **10.8**: Support continued funding and expansion of the [Texas Disability Navigator Program](#).
- Recommendation **10.9**: Encourage public-private partnerships to increase the employment of people with disabilities.
- Recommendation **10.10**: Build capacities of workforce agencies to respond to needs of the aging workforce.
- Recommendation **10.11**: Encourage practices that allow for flexible terms of employment that could benefit older workers while still ensuring productivity for the employer.

Staff and Committee Member Accomplishments - 2012

Executive Director's Report, Angela English

This past year has been an active time of reaching out to various organizations for mutual partnerships, seeking win-win opportunities for all concerned. Additionally, the Committee produced its policy report for the 83rd Legislative Session which was well received by citizens and legislators as a guiding document on the important and salient issues related to Texans with disabilities. The following bullet points are only quarterly highlights, not a cumulative report of activities of the executive director.

First Quarter, January 2012

- Gave a presentation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at the Southwest Disability Conference on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Emergency Management Planning
- Hosted TechLunch Meetings the first Wednesday of every month of 2012
- Facilitated the “*Disability History Factoids*,” each day in October highlighting the contributions of Americans with disabilities to our Texas history
- Participated in weekly conference calls on the development of the National Disaster Response Framework and on the subcommittee for Persons with Access and Functional Needs
- Participated in the Texas Functional Needs Supports and Services Committee meetings (ongoing)
- Facilitated collaboration with Texas Commission in Environmental Quality Accessibility Coordinator a series of videos on “*Creating an Accessible Document in Word 2007*”
- Developed and distributed “Tips for Texans for Cold Weather.” Worked with staff and webmaster to add a Cold Weather” section on Committee homepage to provide necessary information to Texans with disabilities dealing with issues related to cold winter weather, including providing a widget that allows users to find the closest flu vaccine provider.
- Co-hosted, with Erin Lawler, a dozen students from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to the Texas State Capitol; the students learned about the legislative process from Representative Donna Howard and received a tour.
- Reviewed and provided comments on instructional materials used by TDEM for their G197 course related to people with and without disabilities who have access and functional needs

- Participated in Functional Needs and Support Services (FNSS) meeting at Baptist Children and Family Services (San Antonio), November 17, 2011
- Participated in teleconferencing regarding the Alliance agreement work between the National Association of Governor's Committees on People with Disabilities and the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy
- Organized the Holiday Project with Santa at Rosedale School with 75 students. The Governor's Office staff donated over 80 stuffed animals so each student got a stuffed animal of their choice.
- Participated with all staff in the Laws of Teamwork Training in the Governor's Office conducted by the Director of Administration
- Facilitating a Facebook page for the National Governor's Committees on People with Disabilities
- Created the 2011 Annual Report for the Committee and submitted it on January 16, 2012
- Facilitated a scavenger hunt with DARS Division of Blind Services staff related to getting to know other stakeholder agencies
- Worked with the Disability History Month Stakeholder Advisory Group on ideas for October 2012 celebrations

Second Quarter, April 2012

- Facilitated information and technical assistance to stakeholders through GovDelivery with 159 bulletins sent out for the quarter from January 1st through March 31st reaching 199,881 people
- Staff of the Committee conducted the Annual Accessibility Awards in partnership with the Texas APA - Accessibility Professional Association
- All staff attended the Teamwork training sessions conducted each week for 12 weeks given by the Chief of Administration at the Office of the Governor
- Participated in two Texas Division of Emergency Management Disability Stakeholder Advisory Council meetings
- Chaired one meeting of the Disability Stakeholder Advisory Committee's subcommittee on Outreach and Preparedness

- Participated in monthly calls with the National Association of Governor’s Committees on People with Disabilities
- Attended and served BBQ to 350 Wounded Warriors and families for the Wounded Warrior Project at Brooke Army Medical Center
- Presented on a FEMA Think Tank call with a submission which was accepted on *“Charitable Giving During Disasters Using your Smartphone.”*
- Attended the Texas Department of State Health Services Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Coordinated Chronic Disease State Plan Stakeholder Meeting in Austin
- Attended an IBM forum, *“Inclusive Social Business: Leveraging the Power of One to Drive Innovation”*
- Participated in the Region VI Disability Integration Work Group’s webinar: *“Use of Social Media in Emergency Management,”* presented by Williamson County Office of Emergency Management
- Participated in the Texas Workforce Investment Council workshop focused on assisting mature workers in Texas to get back into the workforce. Goodwill Industries of Houston and the Center for Adult and Experiential Learning presented information on a U.S. Department of Labor’s aging worker initiative grant including best practices, lessons learned, and replication of models developed during the grant.
- Worked with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) on updating the Functional Needs Support Services Toolkit prior to the TDEM Emergency Management Conference in April in San Antonio
- Attended a six-hour session on *“Coping with Grief: Clinical Interventions for Normal & Complicated Grief,”* by Harold Ivan Smith, MA, Ed.S., FT
- Rode my bike 20 miles in support of Rosedale School, the Austin ISD school for children with multiple disabilities who are medically fragile
- Presented a session at the Texas Emergency Management Conference on *“Community Engagement: Social Media and Emergency Management for People with and without Disabilities”*
- Attended the two day Texas Obesity Summit organized by the Texas Department of State Health Services Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (NPAOP) Program

Third Quarter, August 2012

- Facilitated information and technical assistance to stakeholders through GovDelivery with bulletins 122 sent out for the quarter from April 1, 2012 through July 15, 2012 reaching 211, 1132 people. (GovDelivery statistics available by request.)
- Participated in two Texas Division of Emergency Management Disability Stakeholder Advisory Council meetings
- Chaired one meeting of the Disability Stakeholder Advisory Committee's subcommittee on Outreach and Preparedness
- Participated in monthly calls with the National Association of Governor's Committees on People with Disabilities
- Participated in the first week of four weeks at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security Executive Leaders Program in May
- Participated in the 4.5 hour planning conference call on the annual [2012 Southwest Disability Conference](#) , a joint collaboration between the [New Mexico Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities](#) and the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
- Invited and participated in the 4 day "Awareness to Action" Workshop by FEMA and Red Cross on effective public messaging
- Attended the Goodwill Industries of Central Texas Hall of Honor luncheon
- Attended the "AT Works: Accessible Technology's Role in Today's Workplace," webinar
- Participating in the Texas Athletic Team – Governor's Cup Challenge each week for 12 weeks

Fourth Quarter, October 2012

- Facilitated information and technical assistance to stakeholders through GovDelivery with 77 bulletins sent out for the quarter from July 16, 2012 through September 30, 2012 reaching 146,605 people (GovDelivery statistics available by request.)
- Participated in two Texas Division of Emergency Management Disability Stakeholder Advisory Council meetings
- Chaired two meetings of the Disability Stakeholder Advisory Committee's subcommittee on Outreach and Preparedness
- Participated in monthly calls with the [National Association of Governors' Committees on People with Disabilities](#)

- Hosted TechLunch meetings on the first Wednesday of every month of 2012. TechLunch is an informal networking group of individuals from public and private companies that are interested in accessible technology solutions for people with disabilities.
- Attended a week long session of the Executive Leader's Program at the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security in August
- Met with Susan Poag of SUMA Orchard Social Marketing Inc. regarding a formative assessment process they are conducting for the Children with Special Needs Task Force
- Finalized the budget process for fiscal year 2013 with Governor's Office Budget, Planning and Policy Division
- Met and discussed with Mark Starford, Board Resource Center of California, Being Safe/Feeling Safe Toolkit for individuals with intellectual disabilities preparedness efforts for emergency preparedness
- Worked with various state agency representatives on hosting 23 accessible tutorials on Accessible 2010 Microsoft Word and Excel
- Volunteered for the Governor's Star of Texas Awards on September 14th honoring wounded or fallen peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical first responders across the state. Ceremony occurred in the House Chamber.
- Attended a Multi-agency Task Force thank you Reception for the state agency representatives who created the accessible Microsoft Word Tutorials and gave out recognition certificates from the Office of the Governor
- Attended two meetings of the Disability Stakeholder meetings on Effective Communications
- Facilitated Governor's proclamations for National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Persons with Disabilities History and Awareness Month in Texas
- Worked on the Disability History and Awareness Month facts created each day in October sent out via GovDelivery
- Finalized the Citizen Policy Input Survey which closed on September 30th. We had 1,131 people take the survey.
- Worked with Department of Information Resources on a Press Release related to a project related to accessible scanning for state agencies and institutions of higher learning

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Community Outreach & Public Information Annual Report, Jo Virgil

Building a stronger network of Local Committees and organizations across the State has helped improve all of our outreach programs. For 2012 the number of community supporters on our email and contact lists has increased to almost 300 contacts in the Local Committee email database, and more than 1,800 in the GovDelivery list. Our increasingly popular [Quarterly Calendar of Events](#), posted on our website, has encouraged Local Committees and other organizations to get the word out about their own events, and to get ideas for more community involvement. This year, the Quarterly Calendar of Events has grown to more than 20 pages of event and training listings.

Our network of Local Committees and Community Supporters has provided us with valuable information and contacts within communities across the State. Members of committees have worked with us on site visits for our accessibility awards program, information on media presentations for our media awards, nominations for businesses and individuals for our employment awards and accessibility awards, and outreach to artists for our NDEAM poster art competition, as well as providing an effective distribution for relevant information from our office to the general public. They have also kept us informed on local issues and programs for people with disabilities, allowing us to constantly update our understanding of potential suggestions for legislation, as well as add to our growing list of resources for people with disabilities. Local committees address a wide range of areas, including housing, transportation, employment, education and access. They also bring diverse entities together including individuals, local public agencies and officials, non-profit organizations and private businesses.

Currently, we have 43 formal Local Committees, as well as many other organizations that act in a less formal capacity but also participate in our network. Our formal list of Local Committees which have links to their websites is available on our website:

- [Abilene Disability Advisory Committee](#)
- [Alamo Area Disability Alliance](#)
- [Alvin Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Amarillo Advisory Commission for People with Disabilities](#)
- Aransas Pass Mayors Committee on People with Disabilities (*no website*)
- [Arlington Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Austin Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Beaumont Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Bell County Judges and Commissioners Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Brownsville Workforce Solutions](#)
- [Bryan/College Station Mayor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities](#)
- Cameron County-Harlingen/Brownsville Area (*no website*)
- [Corpus Christi Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Dallas Mayor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities](#)
- [Denton Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [El Paso Accessibility Advisory Committee](#)

- [Fort Worth Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Garland Therapeutic Recreation Program](#)
- Georgetown Commission on People with Disabilities (*no website*)
- [Grand Prairie Disabled Service Committee](#)
- [Houston Mayor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities](#)
- [Houston Mayor's Office on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Irving Advisory Committee on Disability](#)
- Jasper County East Texas Committee for People with Disabilities (*no website*)
- [La Porte Special Populations Organized Recreation Therapy \(SPORT\)](#)
- [Laredo Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Leander Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Lubbock Community Relations Commission Disability Subcommittee](#)
- McAllen Mayors Committee on People with Disabilities (*no website*)
- [Mesquite Transportation for the Elderly and Disabled](#)
- [Nacogdoches Mayors Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Odessa ABLE Center](#)
- [Pasadena Verne Cox Center](#)
- [Plano](#)
- Port Arthur Mayors Committee on People with Disabilities (*no website*)
- Round Rock (*no website*)
- [San Angelo Disability Awareness](#)
- [San Antonio - Disability Access Office](#)
- [San Antonio – DisAbility.org](#)
- [Texoma Council of Governments](#)
- [Tyler Disabilities Issue Review Board](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Waco Mayor's Committee on Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- [Wharton Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#)
- [Wichita Falls Commission on Human Needs](#)

Our awards programs continue to raise visibility and “up the bar” on public awareness and appreciation for disability issues. The 2012 [Barbara Jordan Media Awards](#) had 87 submissions, and the quality of reporting on people with disabilities becomes more impressive each year. The award has ensured that media professionals and journalism students are increasingly aware of the preferred criteria in producing stories on people with disabilities, which makes for better stories *and* better public awareness.

Last year we re-named our [Employment Awards](#) to honor Lex Frieden, a long-time disability rights champion, and Dr. Frieden attended the awards ceremony in Houston this year to give a Welcome Address. For the winning employers last year and this year, we purchased bronze medallions designed with Lex Frieden’s profile to present as the physical award.

Our partnership with the Accessibility Professionals Association on the [APA/GCPD Accessibility Awards](#) continues to gain momentum and visibility. The January 2012 Award presentation ceremony was well attended and each of the three winners were presented with a Proclamation from the Governor.

Our [NDEAM Poster Art](#) competition is also responding to outreach efforts, resulting in 30 submissions in the 2012 competition. Overall, we distributed almost 2,500 posters to various businesses and organizations in Texas and in other states.

With the help of our tech department, we continue to update our web pages and make them more attractive, more accessible, and more easily navigable.

Program Highlights

Local Committees on People with Disabilities

- Visited with contacts in Galveston, Georgetown and San Marcos about the possibility of forming a Local Committee in their area; worked with citizens in Lubbock on re-vitalizing their Local Committee
- Attended the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities' annual Employer and Access Awards programs and networked with several winners; attended White Cane Day ceremony
- Worked with the Mayor's Committee in Corpus Christi in putting together a presentation at the Governor's Small Business Forum there in June; lined up Scott Tisdall with Walgreens as Keynote Speaker for the forum
- Worked with Angi English, Ron Lucey, and David Ondich on ideas for creating a GoogleGroups listserv for the Local Committee database; decided instead to continue to use the existing email list for interaction for now

Accessibility Professionals Association/GCPD Accessibility Awards

- Worked with the Fred Cawyer of APA to do outreach and set deadlines for nominations for the 2012 Accessibility Awards
- Solicited suggestions for an "Above and Beyond" document to use for site visit teams for the APA/GCPD Accessibility Awards, both as a checklist for accessibility issues and as a list of suggestions for employers and business owners
- Coordinated with Angi English and Fred Cawyer to select 2012 winners, based on full reports from site visit teams for both physical and service accessibility

- Completed and distributed the *Above and Beyond* document to serve as suggestions for businesses in terms of service accessibility and for use in evaluating nominees for our APA/GCPD Accessibility Awards
- Wrote formal Press Releases about the APA/GCPD Accessibility Award, Barbara Jordan Media Award and Lex Frieden Employment Award winners and submitted to the Press Office for approval and release

Barbara Jordan Media Awards

- Lined up four judging panels for the Barbara Jordan Media Awards and oversaw the judging process; compiled scores and comments to determine winners in 13 categories; notified all entrants of the results (Total: 87 entries)
- Worked on the script for the ceremony; lined up keynote speaker (Zach Anner), emcee (Joe Bontke) and award presenter (Mariah Kilbourne, Ms. Wheelchair Texas); assisted video producer on the ceremony video; coordinated with Dr. Bruce Smith with Texas State University, our host
- Worked with Erin and Angi on a survey for feedback on the 2012 Barbara Jordan Media Awards ceremony
- Worked with Don Anders of Anders Photography to finalize the 2012 Barbara Jordan Media Awards ceremony DVD to send to award winners and future event hosts; wrote thank-you letters and follow-up correspondence
- Sent out reminders of the 2013 Barbara Jordan Media Awards submission deadline to print media, broadcast media, book publishers, high school and college journalism teachers, and Local Committee contacts
- Worked with the Texas Association of Broadcasters to publicize information about the 2013 Barbara Jordan Media Awards
- Invited Tony Pederson, head of the School of Journalism at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, to have SMU host our 2013 Barbara Jordan Media Awards; event conflicts meant he had to decline, but asked that we work with SMU on potential future ceremonies
- Spoke with Texas Christian University in Fort Worth about the possibility of hosting our April 2013 Barbara Jordan Media Awards; an event conflict prevented their acceptance, but they asked to be considered for the April 2014 ceremonies
- Enlisted The University of Texas at Arlington's Department of Communication as host for our April 13, 2013 Barbara Jordan Media Awards; worked on long-range planning details including selection of College Park Center as a venue

- Created a promotional card to go with the Barbara Jordan Media Awards lapel pins; worked with staff toward the purchase of pins
- Worked with Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services in Houston to put together an image of the Barbara Jordan Media Awards medallion, for use on the website and other relevant documents
- Requested and wrote scripts for a welcome video from the Governor for the Barbara Jordan Media Awards and Lex Frieden Employment Awards

Lex Frieden Employment Awards



Stacy Zorn, Jo Virgil & Erin Lawler. Oct 24, 2012, 2:08 pm

- Worked with Angi English and Joe Bontke on request for funding from sponsors for Lex Frieden Employment Awards bronze medallions; distributed medallions to 2011 and 2012 winners of the award
- Sent DVDs of photos, Governor Perry’s Welcome Address and Mayor Annise Parker’s Welcome Address for the Lex Frieden Employment Awards to each of the winners
- Began work on a new *Above and Beyond* document relevant to the Lex Frieden Employment Awards, spotlighting innovative ideas for hiring and including people with disabilities in the workplace
- Communicated with the Houston Mayor’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities on long-range planning for the 2012 Lex Frieden Employment Awards
- Oversaw the nomination process for the Lex Frieden Employment Awards, including sending out reminders of the deadline for submissions, contacting nominated businesses for more detailed information on their practices, and preparing documents for distribution to the judges; set up judging panel
- Continued correspondence and teleconferences with Raul Tello of the Houston Mayor’s Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities and Tyrone Shoemaker of



Raul Tello, Lex Frieden, Cheryl Guido, Debra Wanser

Greater Houston Business and Leadership Network to work on finalizing details for the 2012 Lex Frieden Employment Awards

- Researched possibilities of purchasing a glass trophy for the Martha Arbuckle Award going forward
- Confirmed the Waco Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities as our host for the 2013 Lex Frieden Employment Awards

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

- Worked with Jane Thomas, the poster designer, of Apple Specialty Advertising in San Antonio and Beverly Fuqua, NDEAM Poster Art competition winner, on the design of the 2012 NDEAM Poster. Worked with the print shop of one of our ex officio partners, Department of State Health Services.
- Set up a panel of judges for the NDEAM Poster Art competition and oversaw the judging process; announced the winner to the public and notified all entrants (Total: 30 entries)
- Worked with Beverly Fuqua, artist, on travel plans to attend the Lex Frieden Employment Awards to be on hand to sign the posters
- Finalized the *Above and Beyond: Employment Practices* document and printed copies to include in the mailing of the NDEAM Posters
- Sent out notices and took orders for signed Proclamations for National Disability Employment Awareness Month; mailed Proclamations to those who requested
- Requested 50 National Disability Employment Awareness Month Posters to be signed by the Governor for Award winners and other special recipients
- Worked with the staff on mailing out our annual NDEAM Posters across the state as well as some to other states
- Sent out a Call for Entries for the 2013 National Disability Employment Awareness Month Poster Art competition

Outside Events, Presentations and Community Outreach

- Updated our GCPD brochures on the new APA/GCPD Accessibility Award, Lex Frieden Employment Awards, Barbara Jordan Media Awards, and NDEAM Poster Art Competition
- Updated outreach databases for print and broadcast media outlets, public school contacts, Local Committee and Community Supporters contacts, and art organizations

- Participated in the Greater Houston Business Leadership Network teleconference to talk about our Lex Frieden Employment Awards and NDEAM Poster
- Participated in the Texas Workforce Commission's Navigator teleconference to talk about our Lex Frieden Employment Awards and NDEAM Poster
- Gave a presentation to a University of Texas class of rehabilitation students on the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments, as well as an overview about the GCPD
- Put together the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall [Quarterly Calendars of Events](#)
- Worked with Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce and Darren Bates, TWC Disability Navigator, on lining up a speaker for the Governor's Small Business Forum in June
- Worked with Steve Baldwin on the Deaf Smith historical exhibit (April 18–20) and Opening Ceremonies (April 18) in the Capitol
- Created and delivered brochures on GCPD activities to the Texas Municipal League's office for them to distribute at their annual conference
- Attended the Texas Workforce Commission Disability Navigators conference in Austin to give a brief presentation on GCPD activities and to network with Navigators from across Texas
- Assisted staff on writing this year's Disability History Month factoids
- Distributed information on People First language and Disability Etiquette statewide to media outlets and to journalism teachers
- Contacted the Texas Municipal League about the possibility of working together to network and create Local Committees
- Sent out notices and took orders for signed Proclamations for ADA Anniversary celebrations across the State
- Did outreach for the Paralyzed Veterans of America's Art and Essay Contest through the Educators' database and through the Texas Education Agency
- Spoke with planners of the Mayborn Journalism Conference about the possibility of having a session on reporting on people with disabilities
- Attended a Goodwill Industries of Central Texas Tour of the Austin facilities to become familiar with their practices and goals

- Attended the Goodwill Hall of Honor banquet to honor and support winners of their Hall of Honor awards – three individuals and one business
- Volunteered to assist with the Governor’s Star of Texas Award ceremony for law enforcement officers and emergency responders who had been injured or killed in the line of duty
- Volunteered to serve at the Wounded Warriors BBQ in San Antonio
- Attended a talk by Dr. Temple Grandin, noted animal scientist and author with autism
- Participated in the Santa visit at Rosedale school with the rest of the staff and with Joe Bontke, Chair of GCPD, as Santa
- Participated with the rest of the staff in a tour of the Talking Books Program at the Texas State Archives Library

Local Committee Projects 2012:

- Introductory Classes to American Sign Language (Abilene)
- Employment Mentoring Program for young adults (Austin)
- Pro Bono Legal clinics for disability issues (Houston)
- Visual Fire Alarms distribution program – free (Houston)
- Film festival featuring films with a disability focus (Houston, Austin)
- Short Story Writing Contest (Austin – statewide)
- Welcome Reception for Push America (Arlington – cross-country bike ride fundraiser)
- Bicycle Riding workshop (Arlington)
- Summer Theater camp (Houston)
- White Cane Day (Austin, Houston, others)
- Paralympic events (Galveston, San Antonio, others)
- Local business seminar on hiring people with disabilities (Longview, others)
- Dances, Galas for young adults with developmental disabilities (Galveston, San Marcos, others)

Various Venues:

- Hosting GCPD Awards ceremonies
- Family and Personal Attendant support groups
 - Autism
 - Mental Illness
 - PTSD
 - Developmental Disabilities

Traumatic Brain Injury

- Special Movie Viewings for children with sensory disabilities
- Summer and Weekend camps for children with disabilities
- Sports activities for people with disabilities (fishing, archery, basketball, baseball, hockey, etc)
- Advocacy training classes
- Job Fairs
- Employment Awards program
- Accessibility Awards program
- Volunteer Traffic Enforcement programs
- Hosting art exhibits by artists with disabilities
- Art, Theater and Dance classes for people with disabilities
- Hosting and outreach for fundraiser for local non-profits
- Resource and Health Fairs
- Fundraisers, Awareness outreach for accessible playgrounds
- Walk, Roll, Stroll awareness parades
- Golf and other sports tournaments as awareness and fund raisers
- Transition to adulthood classes for parents
- Construction of accessible fishing piers
- Parent/School workshops

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Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator, Erin Lawler

Erin Lawler, Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator, furthered the Committee's mission to serve as a central source of information on the rights of people with disabilities in 2012 through speaking engagements, leadership roles in the disability community, intensive work on the Committee's policy recommendations, and the provision of personalized technical assistance to constituents.

Ms. Lawler's major accomplishments in 2012 included speaking about disability rights on a national stage. Together with Committee Chair Joe Bontke, Ms. Lawler presented on "Social Media, Disabilities, and Employment Protections" through the National ADA Center's Legal Webinar Series. Together with Ms. English, Ms. Lawler presented at a conference sponsored by the Southwest ADA Center on "Emergency Management in the Workplace" to an audience of ADA Coordinators from across five states. Ms. Lawler also gave an hour-long presentation at the statewide emergency management conference hosted by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). Her topic was "The Legal Authorities of Emergency Management: Rights and Responsibilities of People with Disabilities."

Further, Ms. Lawler continued to serve in leadership positions for organizations related to disability rights within state government and to use her legal understanding to provide high-level technical assistance to other state agencies on diverse questions of disability law. She currently serves as the vice-chair of the Electronic and Information Resources Accessibility Council of Texas (ACT), an advisory committee to the Department of Information Resources (DIR), and as an officer of the Disability Issues Committee of the State Bar of Texas, a group of attorneys from across Texas who are committed to making the legal profession more accessible and responsive to the needs of Texans with disabilities. Ms. Lawler provides subject matter expertise to the Functional and Access Needs Support Services working group at TDEM and the newly-formed Disability Stakeholders Advisory Group, also through TDEM, especially on the legal authorities of inclusive emergency management and the non-discrimination principles of law. In 2012, Ms. Lawler contributed new content to TDEM's revision of an existing training course.

In 2012, Ms. Lawler worked closely with Ms. English and Committee Members on the research and drafting of the Committee's biennial policy recommendations. The research component included creating and distributing the 2012 Citizen Input Survey to constituents affected by disability issues throughout Texas. Over 1,100 constituents responded to the survey. Ms. Lawler also read state and federal research studies, reports, news articles, and surveys relevant to topical disability issues. The process of drafting the policy recommendations and supporting materials occurred over several months through the collaborative efforts of Committee Members and staff. Ms. Lawler took primary responsibility for drafting the recommendations and supporting materials for five issue areas: education, health, housing, recreation, and workforce, and served in an editorial role on the other five issue areas.

The Governor's Committee earned significant recognition in 2012 for its contributions toward accessible communication training. Ms. Lawler facilitated the Committee's involvement in the hosting of a series of [learning modules](#) on its website which explain how to create Microsoft Office 2010 documents that are accessible to all people, including people with disabilities. A multi-agency team of Texas accessibility professionals collaborated to create these modules, which use step-by-step video demonstrations and written instructions to make a complex subject

easily understood and effective. The learning modules have already proved to be a benefit to public employees across the state of Texas and are receiving national and international attention. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requested permission to use these modules to educate its own staff as well as the public. The modules are currently available on HHS's public webpage regarding compliance with Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, which addresses accessibility of electronic and information resources.

Ms. Lawler is also responsible for maintaining and updating the Committee's website. This includes posting new technical assistance documents and resources when appropriate, and regularly posting event information, quarterly calendars, and information about on-going Committee awards programs. She also manages the Committee's Survey Monkey account, using the account to create many surveys in 2012, including the major Citizen Input Survey, a survey on preparedness messaging for Angi English's use at a Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross workshop, and regular feedback surveys for attendees of Committee award programs.

Ms. Lawler works diligently to engage constituents and to foster inclusive practices in the community, beyond what is required by law. To that purpose, she serves on a training and technical assistance sub-committee of the Inclusion Team of Texas, an initiative through the OneStar Foundation to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to volunteer in national service programs. She used her mediation skills to facilitate a break-out session at the Austin InterFaith Inclusion Symposium; the theme of the session was "community supports" to help make Austin faith communities more inclusive of people with disabilities and their families. Ms. Lawler also organized a tour of the "Talking Book Program" at the Texas State Library and Archive Commission, a program that provides audio books to Texans with disabilities, for members of the Accessibility Council of Texas and Committee staff members. During October 2012, Texas celebrated its second annual Persons with Disabilities History and Awareness Month and Ms. Lawler promoted the month by sending out daily "Disability History Factoids" and posting dozens of resources to the Committee's website. It was also Ms. Lawler's pleasure to engage constituents through various volunteer opportunities.

Ms. Lawler is a credentialed mediator and has found that the skills she uses as a mediator are often exercised in her one-on-one contact with constituents. In the 2012 calendar year, Ms. Lawler provided personalized assistance to around 400 constituents by phone or email.

2012 Highlights

- Presented on "The Legal Authorities of Emergency Management: Rights of People with Disabilities" at the Texas Division of Emergency Management's annual statewide conference in San Antonio
- Presented on "Emergency Management in the Workplace" at an ADA Coordinators' training, hosted by the Southwest ADA Center

- Presented an ADA Roundtable webinar to a national audience on “Social Media, Disabilities, and Employment Discrimination” through the National ADA Center’s “Legal Series” with co-presenter Committee Chair Joe Bontke
- Worked intensively with Angi English to draft and publish the 2012 Citizen Input Survey, available online, to solicit citizen input on policy issue areas in preparation for the Committee’s biennial policy recommendations

- Conducted intensive research and writing, in collaboration with Committee members and staff, for the Committee’s biennial policy recommendations



- Provided personalized technical assistance and referrals to around 400 constituents over the phone or by email

- Continually monitored trends in disability law and issues related to people with disabilities to keep the website up-to-date, to share with Committee Members and staff, and to research and file for use in policy recommendations

- Served as a subject-matter expert on disability law for members of the Functional Needs and Support Services working group at the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) and for members of the newly-formed Disability Stakeholders Advisory Committee at TDEM

- Created five press release templates for local government use in encouraging emergency preparedness; the press releases cover preparedness for wildfires, tornadoes, floods, extreme heat, extreme cold, and flu; shared press releases on Committee website

- Contributed new content to TDEM’s revision of an existing training course; the Functional Needs and Support Services subcommittee on training requested permission to use parts of “The Legal Authorities of Emergency Management: Rights of People with Disabilities” (presentation from the April 2011 TDEM annual conference)

- Publicized Texas’ second-annual Persons with Disabilities History and Awareness Month by sending out daily “Disability History Factoids” throughout the month of October and posting dozens of resources to the Committee’s website

- Elected as vice-chair of the Electronic and Information Resources Accessibility Council of Texas (ACT), an interagency work group to promote the ongoing improvement of the methods by which state agencies make electronic and information resources accessible to people with disabilities; participated in monthly ACT meetings; helped to organize a working group to review the upcoming refresh to guidance on section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (pertaining to web accessibility)
- Created a “Local Committee Resources” section of the Committee’s website, which includes guidance on disability rights issues relevant for local governments
- Created guidance for Texans with disabilities on requesting a reasonable accommodation from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) related to a driver’s license application or renewal (a frequent constituent question)
- Served on training and technical assistance sub-committee of the Inclusion Team of Texas, an initiative through the OneStar Foundation to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to volunteer in national service programs
- Worked closely with Jo Virgil and Angi English on “Above and Beyond” service accessibility recommendations
- Worked with Jo Virgil and Angi English to create and publish an attendee feedback survey for the 2012 Barbara Jordan Media Awards (designed the survey in such a way that it can be used for future award programs as well)
- Published an online survey on preparedness messaging for Angi English’s use at a Federal Emergency Management Agency / American Red Cross workshop
- Wrote the ADA Proclamation, signed by Governor Perry, and distributed throughout the state in celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the ADA
- Worked intensively with the Office of the Governor webmaster to post 23 learning modules on creating accessible documents using Microsoft Office 2010 to the Committee site
- Organized a tour of the “Talking Book Program” at the Texas State Library and Archive Commission for members of the Accessibility Council of Texas and Committee staff members
- Facilitated a break-out session at the Austin InterFaith Inclusion Symposium; the theme of the session was “community supports” to help make Austin faith communities more inclusive of people with disabilities and their families
- Met with members of the University of Texas (UT) at Austin’s faculty and staff about several programs related to veterans; Angi and Erin answered questions about the policy development process and possible sources of funding

- Met with Dr. Anne Corn, Ed.D., a recent inductee into the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame, about Dr. Corn’s experience related to education of students with disabilities
- Provided information to the Office of the Governor Press Office about accessible voting for people with disabilities in response to a student journalist’s questions (with Jo Virgil); the published article featured information from Committee Member David Fowler
- Volunteered as one of Santa’s elves during the Committee staff’s annual visit to Rosedale School with Committee Chair Joe Bontke as Santa; volunteered at a barbeque honoring veterans and their families at the Warrior Family Support Center, Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio
- Represented the staff of the Committee at numerous disability stakeholder events and conferences, covering legal issues, housing, promoting independence initiatives, accessible technology, volunteerism, and leadership, among others
- Pursued dozens of continuing education opportunities in disability rights law and related topics

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Committee Member Reports on Outreach Activity

Joe Bontke, Chair

- Co-presented “Social Media, Disability and Employment Protections”, a webinar hosted by Southwest ADA Center/Great Lakes ADA Center
- Provided the keynote speech for the annual Employer Assistance and Resources Network (EARN) conference at South Padre Island
- Provided keynote speech for the Entergy Texas Summit in The Woodlands
- Visited, as Santa Claus, 70 students with severe disabilities at Rosedale School, within Austin Independent School District
- Participated in EEOC’s Technical Assistance Program Seminar and shared flyers supporting the annual Lex Frieden Employment Awards
- Served as panelist during The Greater Houston Business Leadership Network Breakfast Symposium where attendees heard about best hiring practices for hiring people with disabilities
- Provided keynote speech at Del Mar College Economic Center in celebration of the American with Disabilities Act (Corpus Christi). Bontke was interviewed by television channel KIII and appeared on the 6 and 10 pm news broadcasts.
- Spoke on issues of ADA enforcement and basic accommodation at Rice University’s outreach program
- Served as featured speaker for Texas Medical Center Human Resources Management; topics included ADA, FMLA, Workers’ Comp, the injured worker
- Provided a breakout session for a CanCare, Inc. seminar, “Dealing with Cancer: Getting Back to Your Future” in collaboration with Memorial Hermann Healthcare System. Bontke’s breakout session was titled Dealing with Cancer in the Workplace.
- Spoke at Houston’s White Cane Safety Day and exhibited Committee information
- Participated in EEOC’s Technical Assistance Program Seminar and shared flyers supporting the annual Lex Frieden Employment Awards.



Aaron Bangor, Vice Chair

- Presented two Accessibility Awards during the annual conference of Accessibility Professionals Association

Rudy Becerra

- Selected to receive the 2012 American Council of the Blind of Texas' "Who's Who Among Blind Texans" Award

Daphne Brookins

- Met with employers and candidate providers at a Job Links conference at a local women's center and housing authority
- Presented to employers and candidate providers during a Job Links event at Texas Christian University
- Presented to local committee representatives, employers and candidate providers on the topic Hiring Engineers and Veterans
- Performed service accessibility reviews for Accessibility Award nominations (hosted in partnership with Accessibility Professionals Association)
- Networked with stakeholders at the Advancing Recovery and Wellness in Texas conference, and with Fort Worth Community Action Partners

David Fowler

- Participated with a press event, Smoke Alarm Outreach Program for Houstonians who are deaf or hearing impaired
- Served on the selection and promotion committee for ReelAbilities: Houston, a festival featuring films from across the world
- Publicized the Committee's Citizen Input Survey to Paralyzed Veterans of America members

Mackenzie Kelly

- Presented to Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) at their quarterly meeting
- Spoke at the Williamson County Public Safety Symposium in Social Media and the Whole Community Concept for Emergency Management
- Co-created Faster Than Disaster crisis map which was a subject of a GovDelivery to recipients in the Emergency Management category. Duplicate information was forwarded to TDEM's State Operation Center's mailing list.
- Presented training to the Williamson County Teen Emergency Response Team (CERT); story appeared in *Taylor Daily Press*
- Presented on the topic "Social Media and Emergency Response" to Texas Department of Emergency Management
- Spoke at an annual GovSec [government security] conference on the "whole community" concept to involve people with disabilities in emergency management continuity planning



David Ondich

- Trained members of the Museum Curators Association about serving patrons with disabilities and providing public accommodations
- Served on the Pedestrian Master Planning Committee for Fort Worth, a transportation workgroup tasked with finding solutions for people living outside of fixed routes or in rural areas
- Provided keynote speech for Annual American Council of the Blind of Texas Awards

Kathy Strong

- Attended the State Supported Living Center's 36th Annual Music Festival held in Nacogdoches. Representative from state supported living center across Texas sent residents to compete in musical events. The two-day event was sponsored by Department of Aging and Disability Services.
- Attended the annual Sports Day Out event sponsored by the Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee

Patty Watson

- Featured speaker at a San Antonio community event where Bank of America surprised three Iraq/Afghanistan war veterans with the donation of new homes. Bank of America partnered with [Operation Homefront](#), an organization that assists veterans with housing needs as they return from deployment.
- As Executive Sponsor of Bank of America’s North Texas Disability Advocacy Network, Ms. Watson’s leadership helped to provide strong participation and volunteer support for the following events: Veterans Resource Center Grand Opening in Dallas, Fort Worth Vision Walk, End of Summer Bash with RISE Adventures in Grapevine, and United Way Rally in Plano.
- Sponsored a webinar on “Caring for your Special Needs Child”. The webinar was designed to assist in navigating the educational and child care resources available for children with special needs and to provide information on the financial and legal challenges many parents face.
- Judged Lewisville Independent School District’s Job Olympics which promotes employability skills for high school students with intellectual disabilities

Annual Disability History Perspectives for 2012

The Texas Disability Perspectives are created at the end of each calendar year to highlight major historical activities related to people with disabilities. The highlighted events or activities are organized into three categories: events or activities that occur in Texas, Nationally and Internationally.

Texas

- Lyndon Baty is the first student in United States to use an “avatar” (named Baty Bot) to attend Knox County High School in Knox City, Texas. Lyndon has an autoimmune disorder and is unable to attend school. The Baty Bot goes to school for him and he maneuvers the robot from home.
- First report of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS) October 2012 - The council was created as the result of legislation authored by Senator Leticia Van de Putte and sponsored by Representative Sid Miller during the 82nd Legislature. The TCCVS was tasked by the Legislature to meet regularly to discuss, identify, and research specific Veteran issues and provide a report and make recommendations to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and Chairs of the appropriate committees of the Legislature. Beginning in November 2011, the TCCVS met regularly to begin this work. Each of the six workgroups met at least four times throughout the period from November 2011 to June 2012. Following is the first report of the TCCVS:
http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/tvc/documents/TCCVS_Report_2012.pdf
- October 26, 2012 - Governor Rick Perry highlighted Texas’ leading role in the advancement of regenerative medicine to produce safe, effective and ethical adult stem cell therapies. Texas has taken clear steps to advance research in ethical regenerative medicine as quickly and safely as possible and its potential to tackle life-threatening diseases.
- Several Texas state agencies collaborated to create 24 tutorial videos that instruct individuals on how to create accessible documents. United States Health and Human Services is now using the educational videos on their website.
- Governor Perry reappointed Chair Joe Bontke, Vice-Chair Aaron Bangor of and reappointed members Daphne Brookins, David Fowler, Rodolfo “Rudy” Becerra, Jr., Margaret Larsen and Patty Watson to the Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities. New member appointments included Connie Sue Kelley, David Ondich, Shawn Saladin and Mackenzie Kelly. The Committee works to ensure Texans with disabilities enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity and self-determination.
- Governor Perry named Kyle Janek, M.D. as executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and announced that Chris Traylor will serve as chief deputy commissioner. This team will oversee the operations of the five health and human services agencies, including more than 55,000 employees, combined annual budgets of more than \$30 billion and the state’s Medicaid program.

- Governor Perry spoke at the inaugural Houston Stem Cell Summit, which focuses on adult stem cell research and its potential to tackle life-threatening diseases. The Texas Legislature, Texas Medical Board and HHSC set up regulatory framework to guide companies, institutions and physicians collaborating to produce effective stem cell research. The Texas Emergency Technology Fund has funded awards totaling more than \$76 million for cancer research and \$52 million for stem cell research.
- The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at The University of Texas at Austin awarded a two-year, \$368,077 grant to provide training and technical assistance to two state-supported living centers (SSLCs) and participating community-service providers supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities. The training and technical assistance will be conducted at the San Angelo and Mexia SSLCs and will focus on trauma-informed care for individuals with a dual diagnosis of an intellectual disability and a mental illness or other challenging behavior. Trauma-informed care is a form of mental health intervention that specifically addresses the consequences of trauma for an individual and facilitates healing. The grant project is part of a partnership with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services aimed at reducing the use of restraints on patients by implementing trauma-informed practices.
- San Antonio received an \$841,000 federal grant to help better connect veterans, seniors and the disabled with transportation resources that can be difficult to find, especially in outlying communities. The service will be available throughout the 12-county Alamo Area Council of Governments region, which at more than 215,000 veterans has the highest concentration of veterans in Texas. About 40 percent of area veterans are over age 60. Under the new AlamoRides system, users will be able to go to a website or make a phone call and access a multitude of transportation options to fit their needs.
- [Goodwill Industries of San Antonio](#) was awarded two new military contracts that will create 73 jobs primarily for people with serious disabilities. The U.S. Army Medical Command awarded a five-year contract to support a newly created medical records facility on Nacogdoches Road that will employ 57 people. In addition, the U.S. Air Force is expanding Goodwill's current Civilian Personnel Files Support Associates contract with an additional 16 night-shift employees at its Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph site.
- The National Auto Body Council launched a new \$1.5 million capital campaign to fund the construction of a new automotive training center in San Antonio. The council will use the money to purchase, completely renovate and equip a 30,000-square-foot facility to house Operation Comfort's AutoMotivation program in the city. Based in San Antonio, Operation Comfort is designed to complement rehabilitation efforts by the U.S. Army at the San Antonio Military Medical Center. The program will provide occupational therapy for veterans with disabilities through automotive-related activities. Veterans who go through this program will can also receive job training to start a new career.
- Mariah Kilbourne of Conroe was selected to serve as Ms. Wheelchair Texas 2012 and as Ms. Wheelchair America 2013. Kilbourne, who was born with cerebral palsy, has always acted on her passion to make all aspects of life accessible to all people; in her senior year at Texas Lutheran University, she wrote a manual on post-college life for people with

disabilities. As Ms. Wheelchair America, Kilbourne tours the nation sharing her enthusiasm for adaptive sports, advocacy, inclusion, and the power of a positive attitude.

National

- Zach Anner, a popular comedian from Austin who was born with cerebral palsy, reached a national level of fame when he was chosen to host his own TV show on the Oprah Winfrey Network. His series, Rollin' with Zach, featured Anner exploring many of America's most interesting destinations, wheeling in his chair from adventure to adventure – surfing, sailing, rock-climbing, water-skiing – all with a sense of humor and passion.
- Starting January 1, 2012, “discretionary clauses” in disability and life insurance policies will be illegal in the state of California. Discretionary clauses allow insurance companies to second-guess doctors’ opinions and decide that the policyholder does not have a disability and therefore not entitled to benefits.
- March 15, 2012 - the U.S. Justice Department announced that the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards) go into effect. These new standards were adopted as part of the revised regulations for Titles II and III of the ADA, published on Sept. 15, 2010, to make buildings and facilities accessible to Americans with disabilities.
- May 15, 2012 - The U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs began accepting applications for the Veterans Retraining Assistant Program (VRAP). VRAP, part of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, is a new program that provides training assistance for Veterans who are over the age of 35 and are not eligible for VA education benefits.
- March 29, 2012 - The U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Advocacy announced a research report titled “Veteran-Owned Businesses and Their Owners - Data from the Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners” (<http://www.sba.gov/advocacy/7540/132031>) documenting the progress of veteran entrepreneurship since the enactment of the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999.
- March 30, 2012 - First-ever FEMA National Preparedness Report - More than 55 million Americans have disabilities; moreover, infants and children make up nearly one-quarter of the nation’s population; nearly one in eight Americans are over the age of 65; and approximately one-quarter of Americans have multiple, chronic medical conditions. Better integrating these populations across all mission areas is an essential element of improving preparedness. View full report: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=5914>

- June 8, 2012 - Accessible home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright was added to the National Register of Historical Places - the property will open to the public as a museum, the 146th anniversary of Wright's birth.
- July 1, 2012 - The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission launched the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program. The goal of the program is to ensure that individuals who are deaf-blind will receive the specialized customer premises equipment needed to effectively access telecommunications services, Internet services, and advanced communications services.
- July 9, 2012 - The Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act [S. 3187] was enacted which establishes a working group to develop best practices, such as the use of Braille or "talking bottles" to ensure the accessibility of prescription drug labels.
- July 9, 2012 - The Creating Hope Act of 2011 is signed into law. The law provides federal incentives to pharmaceutical companies to develop new drugs for children with rare pediatric diseases, such as childhood cancers and sickle cell.
- July 12, 2012 - American Foundation for the Blind and FloCo Apps, LLC have collaborated to produce AccessNote, a note-taker app for any iOS tablet or Smartphone.
- July 17, 2012 - FCC published in the Federal Register the final rule, Hearing Aid Compatibility Technical Standard, adopting the 2011 American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard for measuring the hearing aid compatibility of wireless phones.
- August 15, 2012 - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded nearly \$35 million in grants to public housing authorities, resident associations and non-profit organizations across the nation to help public housing residents find jobs and achieve economic and housing independence. The program named Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency – Service Coordinators Program (ROSS-SC) helps public housing authorities (PHAs), resident associations or non-profit organizations hire or retain "service coordinators" who work directly with residents to assess their needs and connect them with education, job training and placement programs and/or computer and financial literacy services available in their community to promote self-sufficiency.
- August 21, 2012 - Washington, D.C. public schools signed a comprehensive agreement with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, which requires each school to have at least two trained staff members available to administer diabetes care, including insulin and emergency glucagon injections, to students with diabetes.
- In September of 2012, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a bill that prohibits the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) from "flagging" the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) scores of students with disabilities who receive testing accommodations. LSAC challenged the law, and on February 1, 2013, a California State Court issued an injunction blocking its enforcement.

- September 25, 2012 - Tom Golisano, founder of Paychex, pledged the largest-ever gift of its kind-\$12 million to the Special Olympics to launch a new health initiative for people with intellectual disabilities. This donation will be spread out over four years and be used to establish “Healthy Communities,” which are clinics created to specifically address the health care needs of people with intellectual disabilities.
- October 11, 2012 - Netflix reached an agreement with two deafness advocacy groups to caption 100 percent of the company’s online streaming media by 2014.
- October 12, 2012 - The Statue of Liberty reopened and is poised to be more disability-friendly than ever before. For the first time, people who rely on wheelchairs will be able to visit the monument’s observation level and see inside Lady Liberty thanks to the addition of a lift. Previously those with mobility impairments were only able to visit the ground level of the statue.
- November 28, 2012 - NIDRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics](#) released the *2012 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium* in conjunction with the Second Annual Research-to-Policy Roundtable in Washington, DC presented by [Kessler Foundation](#) in partnership with the [Institute on Disability/UCED](#) at the University of New Hampshire. The *Annual Disability Statistics Compendium* is a publication as well as a web-based tool (<http://disabilitycompendium.org/home>) of statistics on people with disabilities and related government programs modeled after the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. The following is the PDF of 2012 Compendium Report: <http://ioddevelopment.unh.edu/docs/default-source/2012-compendium/disabilitycompendium2012.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- The White House honored fourteen individuals as [Champions of Change](#), for leading the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math for people with disabilities in education and employment.
- The Social Security Administration (SSA) has added 52 new Compassionate Allowances (CA) <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances/> conditions mainly involving neurological disorders, cancers and rare diseases. The CA program speeds up disability decisions to make sure that Americans with the most serious disabilities receive their benefit decisions within days instead of months or years.
- The U.S. Census Bureau released updated statistics on the population of people with disabilities in the U.S. According to the new figures, 56.7 million Americans (18.7 percent of the population) have some type of disability. Of this number, an estimated 38.3 million (12.6 percent) have a disability characterized as “severe.”The Bureau’s report, “*Americans with Disabilities: 2010*,” covers distribution by age and gender and provides estimates on various economic factors, including employment rate, income levels, program participation, and health insurance coverage. View full report: http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff16.html

- The National Council on Disability released its annual progress report which provided a glimpse at the current state of people with disabilities in the U.S. This report covers the period of summer 2011 through spring 2012 by issue area, and reviews top-level policy developments affecting people with disabilities, including key federal actions and state trends. View full report: http://www.ncd.gov/progress_reports/Aug202012
- Disability.gov Launches “What’s Your Connection?” Initiative - People with disabilities are often treated as a “separate” or “special” population, even though the reality for most is that their lives are not segregated. The What’s Your Connection? initiative emphasizes the connections among all people and to reinforce the idea that people with disabilities are not separate, but an integral part of American society. The initiative will run for nine months, beginning October 30, 2012 through July 31, 2013, and will use social media, traditional media and grassroots tactics to spark conversations and build support for inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.
- Wal-Mart announced that it is now providing ScripTalk Talking Prescription Containers free of charge to persons with visual impairments as part of a pilot program.

International

- January 2012 - Governor John deJongh, Jr., of the Virgin Islands signed a bill that will give tax breaks to homeowners that build their homes with visitable housing design standards.
- January 25, 2012 - The United States Government Accountability Office published a report that public schools are not affording students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular athletics.
- February 11, 2012 - The government of the Pakistani province of Sindh began disbursing benefit cards to people with disabilities.
- August 29, 2012 - Paralympic Games open in London: “Enlightenment” was the theme of the opening ceremony. The event was guided by physicist Stephen Hawking and the show included 73 professional performers with disabilities and 68 people with disabilities among its 3,250 volunteers. The International Paralympic Committee recorded 4,200 Paralympians from 164 nations were watched by 2.7 million spectators. Women Paralympians set a new record for their participation.
- September 4, 2012 – United Kingdom’s “Bionic Woman” First to Take Home Robotic Suit. Claire Lomas, who is paralyzed from the chest down, was the first person to take home the ReWalk suit for everyday use. The suit was designed by the Israeli company Argo Medical Technologies Ltd. Lomas became famous earlier this year for completing the London Marathon in 17 days while wearing the suit. Londoners dubbed her the “Bionic Woman.” Lomas also recently lit the cauldron at Trafalgar Square to start the Paralympics torch relay.

- September 23, 2012 - Javed Abidi, founder of the Disability Rights Group in India, recently gave extended comments about the status of persons with disabilities in the world's second-most populous country. Mr. Abidi, who also serves as honorary director of the National Centre for the Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, says that India falls far behind the progress made by other countries in Asia and the Global South in providing access to persons with disabilities. He makes clear that giving persons with disabilities access should be India's primary initiative, and that education is impossible without such universal access.
- October 9, 2012 - University of Tokyo and Microsoft Japan are currently in the testing phase of a project which would incorporate Microsoft's Xbox 360 Kinect technology into computers, allowing those with moderate to severe physical impairments to more easily use Windows computers. Kinect is a motion-sensing and voice recognition technology. Microsoft originally created the technology for use with their Xbox 360 gaming system, but researchers at the University of Tokyo Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology saw the applicability to computers. The partnership with Microsoft Japan has created a complementary software system called Observation and Access with Kinect.
- October 22, 2012 - Persons with disabilities in India have a new and unique venue to explore employment and recruitment opportunities on the web. The new online portal, Jobability.org, caters to people with disabilities. The website serves as a virtual meeting place where people with disabilities can exhibit their capabilities, discuss common issues, and share resume documents. Jobability targets leading Indian companies to go through the posted resumes on the site and offer these candidates with disabilities appropriate vacancies
- October 30, 2012 - For the first time in its recent history, China adopted legislation to protect the rights of people with mental disabilities. The new regulation has been debated for more than two decades, and was enacted largely in response to years of accusations of mistreatment of persons with mental disabilities and misuse of China's psychiatric hospitals. According to the Xinhua state news agency, the law will "curb abuses regarding compulsory mental health treatment and protect citizens from undergoing unnecessary treatment or illegal hospitalization."
- November 3, 2011 - local justice officials announced that Puerto Rico has reached an agreement with the United States government, ending a 12-year-long legal battle to improve the island's health system for individuals with mental health disabilities.

- *End of 2012 Annual Report* -

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS IN ALTERNATE FORMATS AND NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

This information is available in alternate formats upon request.

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